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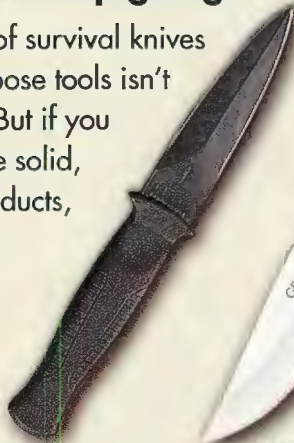
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APRIL 1998
Vol. 23 No. 4



Greg Stewart,
USMC

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USAAF, Courtesy Norman E. Taylor

COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

Shameless Tactics of the Neal Knox Faction

Here we go again — it's time for election of members to the National Rifle Association's Board of Directors. I am proud to be a member of the NRA Board, and have served on this body for many years. This tenure has given me ample opportunity to observe the people who are currently locked in battle over the direction of the association.

This battle reached a peak in Seattle, last year, at the NRA Annual Meeting, where the membership made a forceful statement by electing Charlton Heston to the position of First Vice President. This exercise in democracy effectively deposed Neal Knox and his henchmen from positions of leadership, but they were unwilling or unable to gracefully accept defeat. Now, the Knox faction is making another desperate grab for the reins of power.

Previously in these pages, I have charted the evolution of the Knox faction, from its inception as a group devoted to democratic reform of NRA at the Cincinnati meetings in 1977. Now, the revolution has come full-circle. The reform movement is on the verge of being extinguished by a small group of dissident board members, led by the same Neal Knox, seeking to consolidate power only for themselves.

One of the best examples of the Knox faction's true agenda can be found in the bylaw amendment on this year's ballot. Behind the smokescreen of "financial disclosure," the bylaw amendment is nothing more than an effort to silence dissent from NRA leaders who disagree with the Knox faction and its objectives. Any group that fears the open discussion of NRA issues — such as the one you're reading — cannot have the best interests of the NRA in mind.

Other revealing principles of the Knox faction have included loyalty oaths, secret

meetings, and vicious personal attacks on individuals who do not march in lockstep with their agenda. In sum, Knox and his cronies have shamelessly resorted to tactics better suited to tinpot dictators ruling banana republics.

The NRA is the single most effective advocate for protecting our Second Amendment rights. Anyone committed to fending off the power grabs of the petty tyrants in our nation's capital should be a member. For the same reason, it is of the utmost importance our association be saved from the crippling mayhem that will inevitably result from the Knox faction's self-serving machinations.

If you're a voting member of the NRA, take a few minutes now to sit down with your ballot package from the March issues of the NRA magazines. Vote to keep our Association moving forward by voting "NO" on the bylaw amendment, and by voting "FOR" 26 of the 31 candidates nominated by the Nominating Committee, whose names follow:

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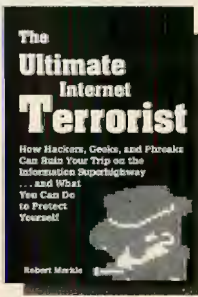
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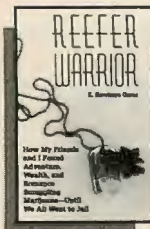
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by Robert Merkle

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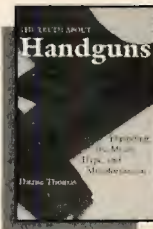
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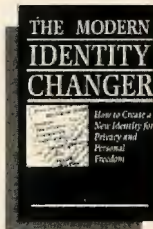
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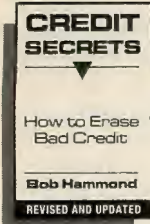
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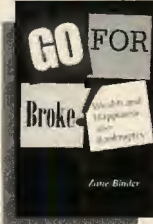
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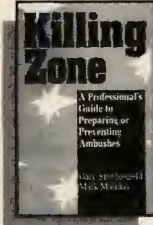


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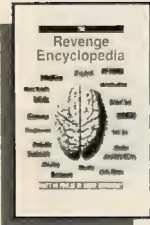
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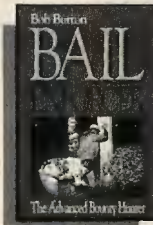


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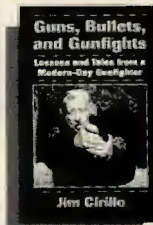
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tremendous commitment, drive and sacrifice. I ask Col. Brown to come observe us in the field or on deployment and then form an opinion about the state of today's soldiers.

To the credit of the Marine Corps, I had a chance to work with a Marine platoon attached to mine in December during a civil-disturbance exercise. I can tell you from personal experience that they deserve every bit of your praise and their reputation is well deserved. They were an exceptionally proud and professional unit.

In the future, please form your opinions of the Army from Grunts in the field, not higher-level staffs, politicians, and the liberal media.

Sgt. Robert Blount
5th Battalion, 87th Infantry
Ft. Kobbe, Panama

LIQUID FUEL

In the article, "Spies, Lies and Computer Tapes" by James L. Pate (Feb. '98), the statement was made that the "U.S. arsenal" did not "contain any liquid-fuel missiles." In point of fact, this statement may not be correct, in that at the dates under discussion, U.S. Army forces may still have had the Lance missile in service, which is a liquid-propellant missile (unsymmetrical dimethyl hydrazine, UDMD, and inhibited red fuming nitric acid, IRFNA). This factual point does not detract from the author's conclusions.

Michael J. Dunn
Auburn, Washington



HIGHLY CRITICAL

As an avid reader of *SOF* I must commend your coverage of the world events as they really are and not as they are hyped and overly editorialized by other journalistic institutions. However, I feel compelled to comment on "Slick Willie Watch," "Peddling Paranoia for Profit" [Jan. '98].

The January installment of "Willie Watch" was agreeable in most ways. Mr. Kenneth Stern certainly is a dishonest man to twist perceptions the way he does, however, it is a childish tactic that *SOF* uses to resort to little-girl-on-the-playground description of Stern's eye-rolling. Yeah, you're right that he can't defend his sloppy research but why, when you resort to name calling, do you call him an "intellectual liberal?" I am just as happy that there are liberals who want to help the nation's weak as I am that there are conservatives who know that the world is a dangerous place and have the guts to do something to protect our interests.

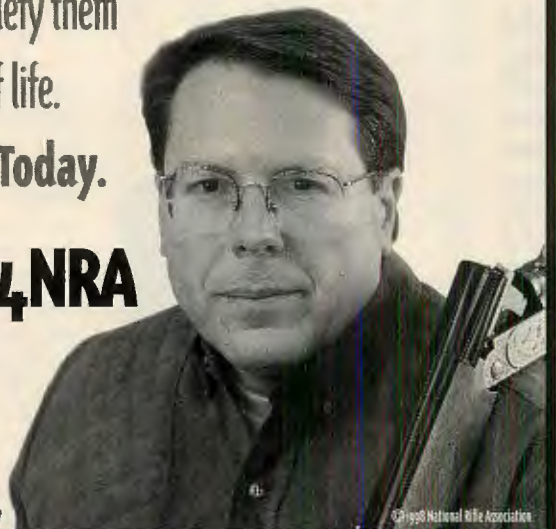
The beauty of my country is that both are working for our common good in the ways that they feel compelled. Fine, everyone's allowed. Why, then is it bad to be an

There's a cultural war raging across America. Anti-gun media, politicians, educators and thought police are storming your values. Assaulting your freedoms. Killing your self-confidence. If you don't believe it, then **why is the Second Amendment missing in your kid's textbooks?** Fight back. Arm yourself with the courage of your convictions. Be proud of who you are and what you believe. Only then and only together can we defy them and defend our way of life.

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Wayne LaPierre
NRA executive vice president

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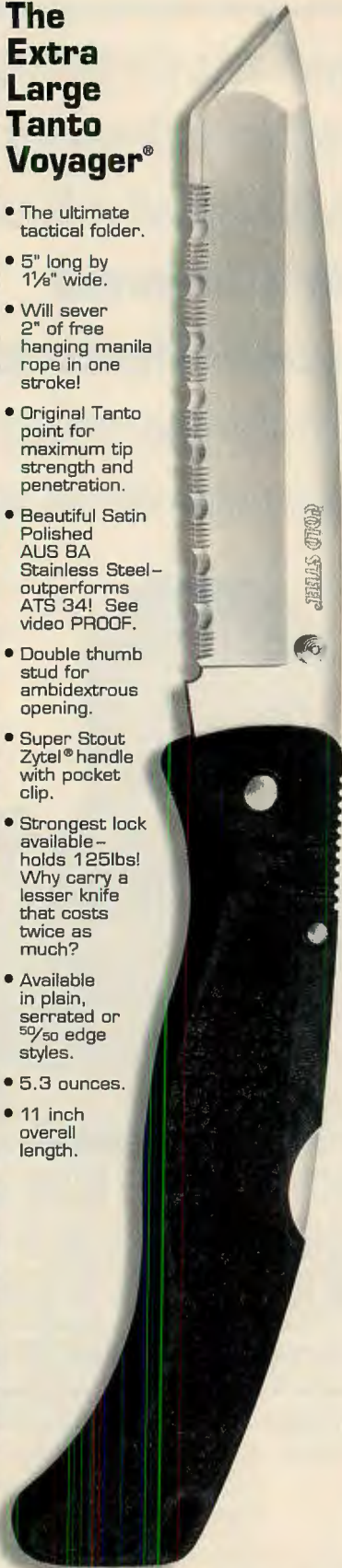
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intellectual? That's what I don't get? If it weren't for smart people in this country we would have our heads as far up our asses as they do in countries such as Liberia, West Africa where superstition rules and magic "protects" gunmen from bullets instead of training and technology. All the science and philosophy that gave our country one of the highest standards of living in the world owes a debt to the Scientific Method that has fought ignorance tooth and nail.

Let's try not to forget that and please, don't give critical thinking skills a bad name.

J. Sander
 Tustin, California

It was Pol Pot, not SOF, who used the word "intellectual" as a pejorative. We used the term to highlight the point that this fellow should have been doing better than he did, as he was intellectually capable of so doing. Nor was "liberal" used in a pejorative sense: For this writer's part, I'll take a bright and honest Jeffersonian "liberal" over a dumb and/or dishonest "conservative" any day. Nowhere in that column is there an implication that it is "bad to be an intellectual." Where did you get that idea? It's a little unnerving the way you ask us to defend dumb ideas we did not express and do not endorse — then end with a slam at our poor ability for "critical thinking."

We agree, that our science and philosophy "gave our country one of the highest standards of living in the world [and] owes a debt to the scientific method." Nobody indicated otherwise, so what's your point here? Our science, based on the Scientific Method certainly was a crucial tool — but keep in mind that scientific method does not stand alone: Deprived of critical reasoning and philosophical righteousness the Scientific Method was also a great aid to Nazi legions who so efficiently eradicated a good portion of entire races.

One final point, you say you are happy there are liberals who want to help the nation's weak. So are we — and we're also plumb tickled to death that conservatives also not only want to help the weak — but they seem to have a much better plan to so do. Is this to imply you think "conservatives" are not in favor of helping the weak? If that's what you think, where do you get off saying that people in Africa have their head up their behind?

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE DUTCH

I am an armorer from an Artillery Battalion in the Royal Dutch Army. I have discovered your magazine a couple months ago and I am very pleased about it.

I am seeking contact with armorers in the U.S. Armed Forces.

I hope you can help me. Thanks.

tdehaay@wxs.nl ✉

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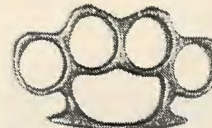
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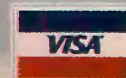
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SAVE THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Published reports indicate that gun-show retailers of the book *Unintended Consequences* have been approached by BATF agents who expressed their disapproval with the dealers selling this book; that although they could not force them to stop selling the novel, the strong implication was that they could make life tough if they did not comply with these unofficial "wishes."

If this indicates a pattern — and not merely an agent or two whose mamma never taught them manners, or an employer who never taught them the Constitution — then that is a newsworthy attempt to breach the First Amendment. Two national media producers are planning coverage of the *Unintended Consequences* phenomenon this year: If you have experienced or know of any cases of official harassment associated with the sale or possession of this book, this is precisely the information these producers need. Please contact the author, John Ross, at: jfross@ix.netcom; by phone: 314-725-7275; or by mail at: 7600 Clayton Rd., St. Louis, MO 63113.

GOLD STAR MOTHERS' DAY

National Gold Star Mothers' Day is traditionally the last Sunday in September: Mark it on your calendar, and plan on joining others in Washington to honor the American women who gave their sons and daughters in defense of liberty. Veterans' groups should plan to

bring their Gold Star Mothers and colors to Arlington National Cemetery, and to The Wall, on 27 September. For invitations and bus passes, contact:

American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.
National Headquarters
2128 Leroy Place, N.W.
Washington, DC 20008-1893

In 1996, the Clintonistas sent the proclamation out a month late, rendering it useless; in 1997, the proclamation was undelivered as of December. With a track record like that, you can expect to have to get the word out on the bush telegraph, folks. Contact the Gold Star Mothers: Show them you care, and plan to be in Washington this fall.

PLA: PROFIT-LIKING ARMY?

The term "Military Industrial Complex" has a whole different meaning in China: There are approximately 10,000 factories, mines, farms and trading companies owned by China's People's Liberation Army. Some 4,000-odd factories and mines account for about half the revenue, while military-owned trading companies, hotels and financial institutions generate about 40% of the income, and military-owned farms generate the remaining 10%.

One of the most interesting Chinese communist military conglomerates is China Poly Group, a highly profitable weapons trad-

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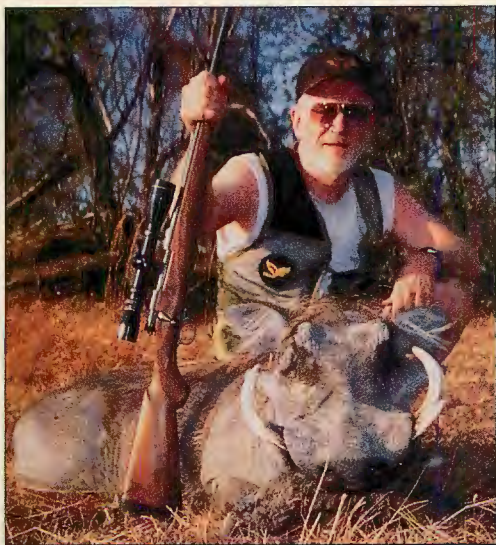


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But, where's the beef? While the rest of us were digging spuds and shucking corn this fall, *SOF* Publisher Robert K. Brown (above, in Eagle Industries' vest) harvested a Tanzanian wart hog, shooting a .330 Dakota Magnum with 3x9 Leupold scope borrowed from professional hunter Jeff Bloom. Meanwhile, Managing Editor Dwight Swift (right) put an Alaskan caribou in the freezer with a stainless Mark V .300 Weatherby on a hunt with Frank Libal of Meryl Wolford's Alaska Hunting and Fishing Venture in Homer, Alaska.

ing company that exports arms to Third World countries. Run by a son-in-law of the late Deng Xiaoping, Poly Group also owns telecommunications, property-development and financial institutions.

Other PLA involvement in basic Chinese industries includes: Mining — nearly 150 major ferrous metal and coal mines; the paramilitary People's Armed Police is one of China's leading gold producers.

Transportation — the air force owns an airline, the navy owns several inland and blue-water shipping companies, and PLA companies have converted the extensive military road net to commercial use.

Drugs — the PLA owns nearly 400 pharmaceutical factories, mainly for traditional Chinese medicines, producing about 10% of the national production.

The Rag Trade — four of the 10 largest Chinese garment enterprises are PLA factories, producing everything from designer labels to running shoes.

Hotels — from five-star hotels to converted Army rest houses, the PLA owns more than 1,500 hotels.

Real Estate — military companies own or are building commercial and high-rise complexes in major cities, from luxury villas in Beijing to the home of the Shanghai Stock Exchange.

Telecommunications — having control of crucial radio frequencies, the PLA is a large and growing influence in the new mobile telecomm market; military construction units lay most of China's fiber-optic lines.

Vehicle manufacture — some 70 army-run factories make about 20% of China's cars and trucks.



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with a new web page by Jews for Preservation of Firearms Ownership. Gun-control organizations have been unable to figure out just how to respond to JPFO's well-documented, straight from the shoulder defense of private firearms ownership and have largely just given up trying. See why by checking out their new web page at <http://www.JPFO.org> or you can contact them by e-mail at Against-Genocide@JPFO.org.

The JPFO web site is managed by Chris W. Stark, Director of Electronic Communications, who may be reached at P.O. Box 1924, Crosby, Texas 77532-1924; phone: 713-217-0649. JPFO publishes a series of highly successful illustrated pamphlets featuring "Gran'pa Jack," who succinctly and accurately leads the readers down the constitutional route to private gun ownership and other Bill of Rights issues.

Contact Aaron Zelman, Executive Director, JPFO, 2874 S. Wentworth Ave., Dept SOF, Milwaukee, Wis. 53207; phone: 414-769-0760; fax: 414-483-8435.

— Richard Rongstad

AIR-BURST SMALL ARMS

Scheduled for field duty in 2006, the Objective Individual Combat Weapon (OICW) will weigh in at 14 pounds and fire both the 5.56mm NATO round and a new 20mm air-bursting round, which, with a slated "full-solution" fire-control system, will give the weapon the unique ability to engage targets behind cover.

The fire-control system includes a laser range finder, ballistic computer, video camera, direct-view optics, environmental sensors, electronic compass, target tracker, thermal module and optional laser pointer. To service a target behind an obstacle the soldier would determine the range to the obstacle, and use an air-bursting 20mm round to cover the area behind the obstacle with frag.

Notes Matthew Zimmerman, the Army OICW program manager at Picatinny Arsenal: "It offers a revolutionary new capability, integrating a suite of advanced opto-electronics with a 20mm air-burst-

ing grenade to allow soldiers to take out targets an M16 cannot... the soldier can precisely place an air-bursting round in the vicinity of an enemy soldier behind a tree, around a corner or on a rooftop."

The Army is slated around 1 March to choose between AAI Corporation and Alliant Techsystems to develop the finished weapons system. Current procurement projections peg the basic weapon at about \$5,000 each; with the fire-control system the cost will be \$10,000 each — and up to \$19,000 with high-burst ammunition.

IRIS SCAN FOR NAGANO SHOOTERS

Japanese security forces for the Nagano Winter Games, worried about firearms loose in a country that has some of the world's most restrictive gun laws, will be using iris scan technology to control access to the rifle storage room in the Olympic Village.

CORRECTION

Due to an editing error, Paris-based Lebanese arms dealer Sarkis Soghanalian was incorrectly identified as Libyan in a photo caption on page 34 of the February issue's story, "Spies, Lies and Computer Tapes." We regret any confusion this may have caused.

PENTAGON ADMITS CONTROVERSIAL SHOTS

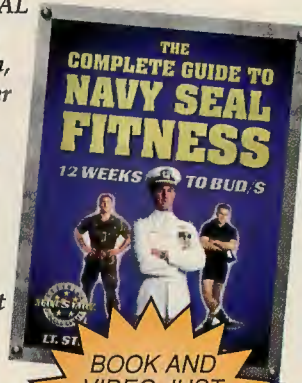
According to Associated Press, the Pentagon has acknowledged that a vaccine with unknown health effects — botulinum toxoid vaccine — was given to some 8,000 Gulf War soldiers in an attempt to protect against chem/bio warfare. That vaccine is presently under study as possibly contributing to Gulf War Syndrome. The FDA had given permission to administer the vaccine without consent, but DoD spokesman Jim Turner said that USSOCOM decided to make the program optional. Turner noted, however, that he was not sure what GIs were told about the inoculation — it is possible not all troops were given a choice to reject it. ✕

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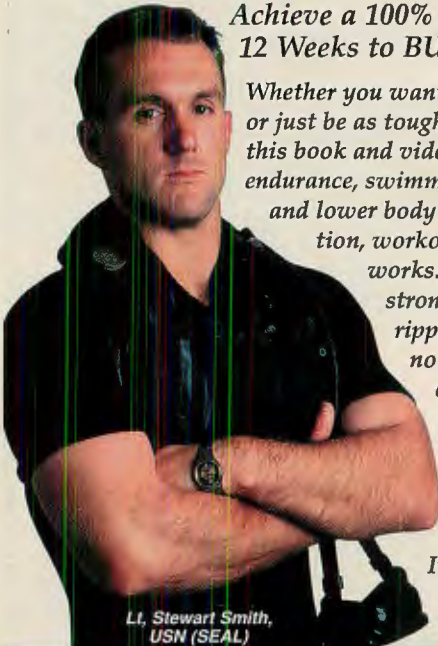
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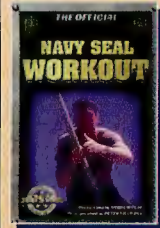
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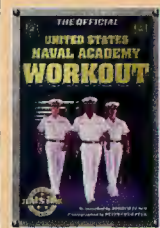
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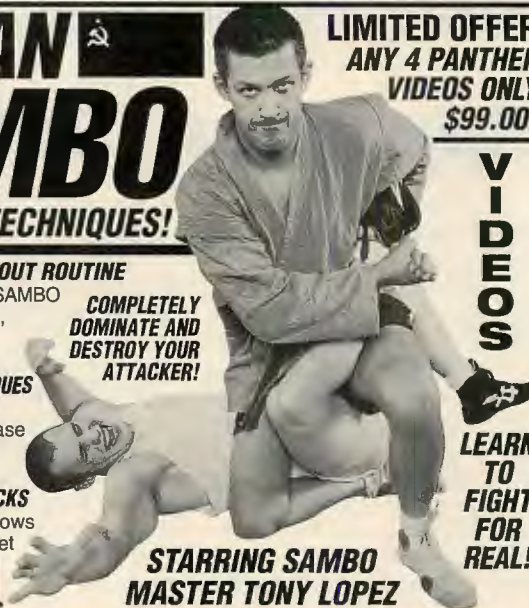
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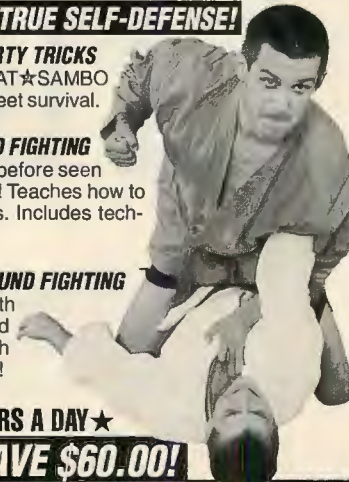
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Zippergate Dot Com

A joke of the times:

The White House announced its decision today to overturn Air Force Secretary Widnall's decision to discharge Lieutenant Kelly Flinn, the nation's first female B-52 pilot. Sources at the White House said the president believes Lt. Flinn can best serve her country by serving on Air Force One. Sources also believe the President made the decision personally after reviewing the transcripts of the court-martial investigation. The President decided that her unique skills qualified her for the position and sources said they "expect the president will be working closely with her." Sources indicate Lt. Flinn will likely be safe from further prosecution because "she'll be working directly beneath the president." — courtesy of the Internet's www.gargano.com/airforce1.html

Adultery has led to the court-martials of 286 military personnel in seven years, writes the *Chicago Tribune's* Stephen Chapman.

Lieutenant Flinn took a high-profile ouster from military service for sleeping with a married man in Minot, N.D. Flinn will never pilot another military jet. At press time, however, her former commander-in-chief, Slick Willie, could still ride in Air Force One at will.

Where Zippergate takes Clinton, the nation, and this column, will become more clear in months ahead. Mainstream print and broadcast news can give the public only filtered views of the sex

scandal, involving Clinton and a former 21-year-old White House intern. Some truth will surface, freeing itself from the vortex of professional spin.

The vortex may hide from view, however, some of the big issues. The filter will focus the public's attention on the weighty secular question of whether a romp in the White House really undermines national security, the economy and all that seems important.

The vortex will likely hide the pain of a wife and daughter, Hillary and Chelsea. It may just ignore all of Clinton's military subordinates doing time in Leavenworth for cheating on their wives.

The media — always proud to invent and popularize new forms of sexual discrimination in the workplace — may not show compassion for the 21-year-old intern trying to launch a career. The filter won't remind us that most executives would be fired for buying an intern a dress. And the press may treat Clinton differently from others for potential witness tampering.

But this is the '90s, folks, and the media elite have only a fraction of the control they did only a decade ago.

Within hours of public allegations the president slept with an intern — which Clinton didn't soundly deny at first — the Internet was buzzing with jokes, discussions, T-shirt offers and World Wide Web sites dedicated entirely to Clinton's latest affair. Instantly, some clever Webmasters registered domain names "www.zipper-

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gate.com," "www.zippergate.org," and "www.zippergate.net."

"I have a client who sells Slick Willie T-shirts, bumper stickers and other Clinton-related items," said Willie Jester, a Virginia-based Webmaster who registered "www.zippergate.com."

The client, he said, called immediately after hearing "Zippergate" on the news, and inquired about a Web site. He plans to feature Zippergate developments, and offer mail-order Slick Willie paraphernalia.

"I think there will be an incredible amount of discussion about this on the Internet," Jester said. "It's the perfect forum for keeping informed about developments, and to discuss it with people from all over the world."

A quick search, one day after Zippergate broke, found 1,023 Internet newsgroup discussions containing the words "Clinton," and "sex"; 659 containing words "Clinton" and "scandal"; 477 containing words "Clinton" and "intern"; 72 containing "Clinton" and "adultery."

Novice Internet users beware: Not everything you see is true. More than ever, consumers of information must be smart. Things must add up, be corroborated, and make common sense.

Keeping that in mind, the public can glean a seemingly endless amount of information, entertainment and opinion from the Internet — no longer at the mercy of giant information filters owned by a few media conglomerates.

Some good places to start include:

- alt.impeach.clinton — a Usenet group that allows Internet users to leave information and opinions about Clinton on what amounts to a world-wide electronic bulletin board.

- www.impeachclinton.net — A Web site with a comprehensive list of links to other Internet offerings devoted to Clinton skepticism. The home page offers an order form for what it calls "the hottest bumper sticker in the nation!" The sticker, which sells for \$3.99, features a large graphic "M," next to a picture of a peach (the fruit) next to a picture of Clinton.

- www.impeachclinton.com — A Web site with a slightly more extreme view than some of its competitors. In a mission statement,

the site says "we are driving toward impeachment of President Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, the leftist-pundit mass media in the U.S., and the leftist political pundits worldwide who are backing the Clinton/Gore Administration and its anti-family, anti-faith and anti-freedom goals." It contains a "living site" in which users are encouraged to help develop "the legal case very carefully for impeachment of administration officials."

- www.impeachment.org — A Web site developed by the National Impeach Clinton A.C.T.I.O.N. (Activate Congress to Improve Our Nation) Committee. The committee, an affiliate of The John Birch Society, is hoping the Clinton intern scandal will fuel its actions, previously considered extreme. The site offers dissertations on an array of "impeachable offenses," including "illegal fundraising, bribery, terrorist ties," and "executive usurpation toward a police state."

- www.io.com/~cjburke/clinton.html — The Bill Clinton Joke-Of-The-Day Page. On 22 January, one day after the intern scandal broke, the site billed itself the "Soon to be the Al Gore joke page." The site is modestly named, as it features more than one joke on any given day of the week, taking a dark comedic look at a dark period in politics.

Two examples from 22 January:

Q. Why does President Clinton invite so many ladies into his private study? A. He wants to show them his executive branch.

Q. What's the new name for the place where Bill Clinton does his business? A. The Oral Office.

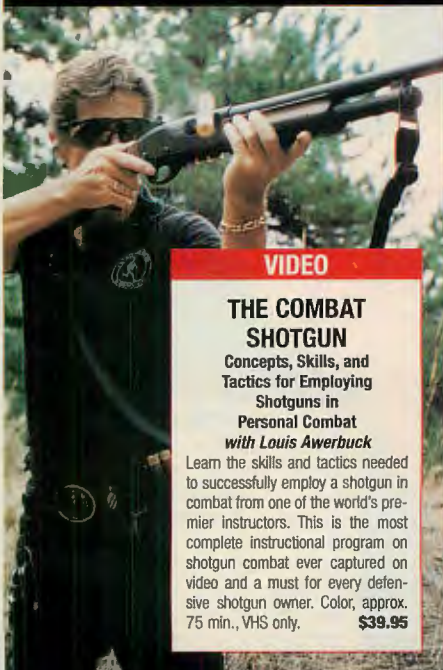
- www.zpub.com/un/un-bc9.html — Titled "Bill Clinton Meets the Shrinks," this site features a serious, and in-depth psycho analysis of Slick Willie. This isn't a joke. The essay takes a serious look at Clinton's Oedipus complex and what might explain the president's "deceptiveness, sexual profligacy, food and exercise dependence, cowardice," etc.

Other Clinton Web sites are abundant, and discussions rage on dozens of Usenet groups devoted to government, military and fidelity.

If Clinton survives all the sex scandals, let's hope it's the public's choice. It won't be for lack of the public's ability to network, communicate, persuade and make informed decisions. ✂

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WORLD SITREP



1

UNITED STATES

Nuke policy: Clinton signs nuclear weapons directive, revising U.S. nuclear war-fighting plans devised by Reagan for Cold War strategies. Old plans deterred all-out nuclear war with Soviet Union. Clinton plans designed to fight small nuclear exchanges with regional powers. Under new plan, United States to respond with decisive, disproportionate nuclear strike if any nation attacks United States. New strategy increases number of weapons targeted at China. Previous strategy made use of nuclear weapons unlikely against any enemy other than former Soviet Union. New policy maintains triad of bombers, land-based heavy missiles and submarine-launched missiles. • **Anthrax vaccine:** Pentagon to vaccinate all military personnel against anthrax biological weapon. Vaccines begin summer '98 with troops in Persian Gulf and Korea starting 18-month cycle of shots. All troops, including reserves and national guard, to be vaccinated within six years. Clinton to pass on vaccine. • **Downsizing:** Navy to retire seven Spruance-class destroyers, without vertical-launch systems, in 1998, including *Cornte de Grasse*, *Conolly*, *John Rodgers*, *Merrill*, *Hill*, *Leftwich*, and *Ingersoll*. Marine Corps to reduce Harrier squadrons from 20 aircraft to 16.

2

RUSSIA

Conventional arms race: Government charges United States move to replace some nuclear weapons with precision-guided conventional weapons threatens arms race, as U.S. refuses to discuss limits on such weapons. • **Uranium sale:** Russia announces plans to sell uranium from dismantled reactors and weapons on world market, to increase revenue by \$400 million. Under U.S. pressure, government agrees to sell only natural uranium, not weapons grade from dismantled weapons and reactors. • **Tank attack:** Chechen gunmen attack Russian tank-battalion garrison camp in Buinaksk (Dagestan). Two tanks and array of equipment destroyed. • Government to destroy 40,000 tons of chemical munitions, most of aircraft bombs. • Government signs \$3 billion contract to build two nuclear reactors in China. • Military deploys first single-warhead Topol-M missile. • Yeltsin promises improved human rights during 1998. • Moscow pays last of back wages to public employees.

8

MEXICO

Ateal massacre: Infighting kills 45 Tzotzil tribespeople and injures 31 others in town of Ateal. Massacre brings international condemnation on Mexican government. Zapatista leader Sub-Commander Marcos and human-rights groups use incident to accuse government of collusion and arming the killers. Marcos says government wanted to create incident to assault rebel stronghold. Government arrests 40 for massacre, including Chenalho Mayor Jacinto Arias Cruz. Many suspects support ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party. • **City Soldiers:** Mexico City's first elected mayor vows to remove soldiers from police work in city.

7

ALGERIA

Security forces continue sweeps against armed insurgents, killing hundreds of them. Insurgents launch bomb and terror attacks, killing hundreds of civilians. Some factions of FIS call ceasefire while others reject it.

10

COLOMBIA

Drug battles: Cano Limon oil pipeline blown up for 61st time in one year. Right-wing paramilitaries continue terrorizing northern Colombia. FARC rebels destroy radio re-transmission base on Patascoy Mountain, killing 10 and capturing 18 of the 34-man garrison. Loss of isolated base prompts government to buy \$42 million French satellite communication system to avoid need to protect isolated repeater stations. Other clashes kill 57 peasants, four soldiers, seven FARC rebels, five former rebels, and 29 militiamen. U.S. supplies \$37 million in military aid because of growing drug threat in Colombia.

6

CONGO

Riot police disarm militias in Brazzaville. • Congo calls for international probe by human rights organizations of 1993 and 1997 civil wars. • Congo condemns Amnesty International as "enemy of the people" after agency's French Section releases report detailing massacre of 800 people at Wendji by government forces since Kabila came to power.

14

ISRAEL

Military space program: Israeli and United States defense officials explore future joint development of multi-billion dollar military space program. U.S. officials cite Israel's research into new launch vehicles and development of sensors and early-warning technology as potential areas for future cooperation. • Air Force negotiates possible \$2 billion purchase of 20 to 40 F-15Es or 25 to 70 latest-block F-16s as part of 10-year modernization program.

15

SOUTH KOREA

Military reforms: Sweeping military reforms planned under new government of South Korean President and pro-democracy crusader Kim Dae-jung. Reforms to come after sweeping review of military readiness, intelligence capabilities and defense procurement plans and procedures. Kim criticizes military for unprofessionalism, political involvement and corruption.

3 CHINA
NATO politics: Government charges United States trying to dominate world politics by pressing for expansion of NATO. • Clinton Administration pressures Voice of America out of broadcasting interview with Wei Jingsheng, saying it might hinder future prisoner releases. • Wei warns United States against being "duped" that China is improving human-rights' status. • Chinese police kill man who attempts hijack of airliner to Taiwan.

4 DENMARK
Mechanized mine clearing: Danish Army receives first four of 12 Hydrema 910 Mine Clearing Vehicles to arrive in 1998. Vehicle provides rapid clearance of surface or buried anti-tank mines which contain up to 10kg of high explosive. During mine-clearing operations, vehicle driven in reverse with cab to the rear.

5 SOMALIA
Turmoil continues: Clashes continue throughout country. Aidid and Ali Otto supporters hold peace rally. Two top officers for Aidid killed in fighting. Aidid and Ali Mahdi sign "historic reconciliation agreement" as worked out in Egypt. Power sharing to be worked out at conference of 564 delegates. Two northern warlords refuse to attend. Colonel Yussuf and General Nur, of Darod Clan, reject peace deal and form own splinter faction against Aidid. Mohamed Egal, head of breakaway Somaliland area, refuses to attend peace talks, claiming his enclave is no longer part of Somalia. Ethiopia rejects agreement, saying agreement will start new war.

6 INDIA
Rebel fighting: Bodo Liberation Tigers remain active in Assam, as do leftist People's War Group in Andhra Pradesh, the Nagas along Burmese border in Manipur, the Maoists in Bihar, the Sikhs in Punjab, and the All Tripura Tiger Force. Bombings frequent across country. India blames neighboring countries for failing to control rebels. Thousands flee Manipur state to escape fighting between Paite and Kuki tribes. Coalition government collapses in political crisis, forcing new elections.

9 TURKEY
 President Yilmaz seeks strategic partnership with United States, having been scorned by EU. Clinton welcomes strong bonds with Turkey, but urges Turkey to continue trying to enter EU. United States indicates Turkey unlikely to get approval to buy 45 U.S. attack helicopters without major improvements to human-rights record.

12 LIBYA
Military complex? Media reports large, underground irrigation pipeline network, under construction, may be large military complex. Libya scoffs at reports. United States says Libya building underground chemical-weapons plant at Tarhuna and that United States would not allow its completion.

11 CUBA
Payback time: United States Federal judge orders Cuba to pay \$137 million to families of three pilots killed when Cessna shot down in 1996; orders Cuban Air Force to pay \$50 million. Funds taken from frozen Cuban accounts in U.S. Cuba declares trial and fines "illegitimate." • Government complains U.S. still giving refugee status to Cubans who enter U.S. illegally. Government complains planned U.S. blimp with radio/television transmitter for anti-communist broadcasts would violate 1987 agreement. Cuba vows to jam broadcasts. **Castro secure:** CIA report says Castro secure in position and unlikely to be overthrown.

16 BRAZIL
Carrier revival: Brazilian Navy to start A-4 Skyhawk operations on carrier *Minas Gerais*. Kuwait Air Force negotiates sale of 23 A-4 Skyhawk strike fighters to Brazil for \$70 million. Brazil carrier aviation ended when air force retired last of eight carrier-capable S-2E Tracker aircraft in 1996. Skyhawks make Brazil only South American country with fixed-wing carrier operations.

17 RWANDA
Refugee slaughter: Suspected Hutu rebels raid Tutsi refugee camp in northwestern Rwanda, slaughtering more than 200, wounding nearly 200 more, say reports by United Nation's refugee agency. Most victims had machete wounds. Attack was second on Mudende camp since August 1997, when more than 100 refugees were killed. Refugees fled Masisi region of neighboring Congo in 1996 to escape Hutu attacks.

World Sitrep is compiled in part from the biweekly newsletter *For Your Eyes Only: An Open Intelligence Summary of Current Military Affairs*. Published by Tiger Publications (P.O. Box 8759, Dept. SOF, Amarillo, Texas 79114-8759); subscriptions are \$70 per year (26 issues), \$74.38 in Texas. Sample issue available for \$3. Those interested in world intel are encouraged to subscribe.

Automatic Esoterica

I've fired the superb Czech ZBvz30J (Yugoslavian model) in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the dreadful Danish Madsen Model 1914 in El Salvador — and about 600 others at stops in between. They have been sometimes accompanied by some pretty unusual accoutrements. Here are just four that you might find as fascinating as I did.

Scoping The MAG

If machine guns are, in fact, area-target weapons, then mounting an optical sight designed for use on a rifle, which is most certainly a point-target weapon, is of dubious value. Nevertheless, beginning about a half-century ago, it started to become popular to install scopes on machine guns (although as far back as World War I, the Germans attached an optical sight to the '08 Maxim water-cooled machine gun).

Most ubiquitous, and far and away the best, of the so-called General Purpose Machine Guns is the Belgian FN MAG 58 and its derivatives. In Great Britain, the most common infantry version of the FN MAG 58 is called the L7A2 (in British nomenclature the "L" signifies Land Service and the "A" and number following it the modification state of the piece of equipment). It can be equipped with a very sophisticated, and quite expensive, tripod (called the L4A1) of the soft (or "flex") mount type



British SUIF 4X rifle scope attached to L4A1 tripod together with FN MAG 58 GPMG.

Starting in the early 1970s, selected L1A1 Self-Loading Rifles (the Commonwealth FAL — an inch equivalent of the FN FAL manufactured initially at Enfield) were equipped with the Sight Unit, Infantry Trilux (SUIT). This detachable scope of 4X magnification had a tritium-illuminated inverted aiming post.

Sometime subsequent to the adoption of the SUIT, an adapter was developed that permits the installation of this optical sight on the L4A1 tripod. I can find no official reference to that application. Yet, I have in my possession a mount for the SUIT which has been attached to a spring-loaded aluminum dovetail that mates with the bracket required to attach the C2 Trilux mortar sight on the British GPMG tripod. Was this ever fielded? I don't know, but someone went to a great deal of trouble to design, machine and anodize this adapter and engrave a British military inventory control number on it.

Steyr MG74-3 Machine Gun Tripod

There are basically two types of tripod mounts traditionally used by the infantry with medium machine guns. So-called "hard" mounts usually consist of the tripod and a cradle which fits into the tripod's pintle and permits both coarse and fine elevation and traverse adjustments without any other attributes. The very first Browning and Maxim

Continued on page 25



(more about that a little later).

A milled channel on the rear support of the left-side buffer permits installation of a bracket into which can be inserted an optical sight. However, this feature was originally intended for indirect fire from defilade and thus the sight normally supplied is the C2 Trilux, the same sight unit used with the British 81mm L16A2 mortar (the battalion's main fire-support weapon). This is a "dial" sight that permits laying indirect fire at ranges up to 1,800 meters.



(left) Steyr tripod, a so-called "soft" mount for the MG3/MG-74-3 caliber 7.62x51mm NATO GPMGs has a firing handle and grip on the right side of the buffer system. (center) M1917A1 water-cooled BMG with AA ring sight, water can and hose, wooden ammo box and M1917A1 tripod and cradle with AA extension. (right) Mk1 Bren LMG manufactured at Enfield in 1940 with unusual 21.5-inch Ishapore barrel. Standard Mk1 25-inch barrel shown above. Note Australian Owen SMG foregrip attached to gun's forward mounting pin, a practice developed during the 1950s' Malaya campaign.

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It's been called "the most brutally effective fighting system ever seen!"

Before explaining more about this system, here's how Jerry Peterson, the creator of this system, became the first — and only — civilian ever to standardize, license and teach a hand-to-weapon fighting system to the United States military.

In 1989, Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC), the group which controls all SEAL activity, was looking for ways to standardize hand-to-weapon combat techniques. After an exhaustive review, they had **rejected every single martial art form in the world.**

They found each completely unworkable in combat-oriented fighting situations where SEALs were in full gear, carrying 100# packs, and often knee-deep in water.

Amazing Scientific System

Then a SEAL NSWC officer (with black belts in 3 martial arts) saw Jerry Peterson's *scientific* fighting system. What he stumbled on wasn't martial arts. In fact it was unlike anything he'd ever seen before.

The SEAL officer watched in disbelief as a class of inexperienced students threw real punches for virtually 1 full hour, **never repeating the same sequences.** In one session he witnessed more fighting than most martial arts students see in a year.

Later, two top brass at NSWC saw the officer demonstrating moves he'd learned. But intrigue turned to doubt when they learned the originator was an ex-Army enlisted man.

Still they met with Jerry, as much out of admiration for his Vietnam record as anything (he spent 15 months as lead point for Charlie Company, the 173rd Airborne — one of the most decorated units of the war). As Vietnam vets, the SEAL officers figured Jerry at least would understand their needs.

Easily Defeats Decorated SEAL

But they were totally unprepared for what happened. To prove his system, Jerry Peterson and a highly-decorated SEAL Officer (and at 240, 100 pounds heavier than Jerry) went toe-to-toe — but at half speed. To the Officer's amazement he was **instantly** disabled and dropped to his knees.

Only then did he realize — had he not been talked out of going full speed by others who knew the awesome power of Jerry Peterson's system, his false confidence in his martial arts training and in his sheer size advantage would have left him with an arm broken as easily as a match stick!

In 5 short minutes these SEAL officers — men who had seen everything in the way of brutal fight-

ing, and who had virtually unlimited budgets to develop the SEALs into the world's best — were blown away by Jerry Peterson's *Autokinematic™* fighting system.

Officially Required SEAL Training

Following a pilot program at Command headquarters all SEALs began receiving this training. Still, hardheaded, cocky, non-believing SEALs, many with extensive martial arts backgrounds, constantly tested Jerry:

□ SEALs are the most proficient combat swimmers in the world. Yet 40-year-old Jerry (who wasn't a particularly good swimmer) "drowned" SEAL after SEAL in training. His scientific principles apply on any terrain.

□ SEALs are trained to run 20 miles in soft sand. But Jerry (who really wasn't in great shape) had them gasping just 5 minutes into his first workouts while he participated effortlessly. He used breathing techniques others had never seen (techniques he can teach you in minutes).

□ In Europe Jerry challenged a deployed SEAL platoon to pin him against a wall. All thought it a joke. Yet he escaped — from the grasp of 14 of the most proficient fighting men in the world (then showed it was no trick — simply physics, and easily learned).

Today SEALs use all these scientific techniques and many more. Since 1989, Navy SEALs go through a minimum of 40 and up to 600 rigorous hours of Jerry Peterson's training prior to deployment (often in intense, 24-hour a day sessions).

Top Government Officials Amazed

His system was demonstrated to Navy Admirals, a 4-Star General, and Congressional leaders — as well as the Secretary of the Navy and the U.S. Secretary of Defense!

Jerry was even called in prior to Desert Storm to brief the military on using *Neural Offensive Linguistics™* (a cornerstone of his system, it defines a mind set which eliminates all defensive thinking, allowing anyone, even you, to make instantaneously correct decisions in the midst of any hostile environment).

Devastating Power Gives You An Unfair Advantage

In his *HCS* video course Jerry Peterson introduced you to his revolutionary system.

Now, with the publication of *Jerry Peterson's SCAR-HCS Hand-To-Weapon* fighting system, Jerry leads you into the never-before-seen world of brutal, no-holds-barred gun, knife and club fighting — material you've never seen (unless you were in elite Special Operation forces).

You'll learn the same hand-to-weapon techniques, the same mental approaches, the same "kill" sets Jerry developed for over 200 SEAL SCARS instructors. (These SCARS instructors now teach this system to all branches of the military Spec Op forces — Army, Navy and Air Force).

You'll know how to defeat, seriously disable and, when necessary, **kill** anyone threatening your life or the life of a loved one or friend!

Guaranteed To Work In Your Most Nightmarish Hostile Situation

Everything in his system was proven in the most intense war lab of the past 30 years — Vietnam!

But this isn't a course to impress friends at your Karate studio. The Instructor Qualification Series is Jerry Peterson's **complete** professional fighting system.

And professional fighting has but one objective: to defeat an attacker incredibly fast. In 29 years Jerry's longest fight lasted but 5 seconds!

This system is only for those who need a powerful yet amazingly **simple** system (simple because it's based on quickly-mastered scientific principles **not** a difficult art form) to protect them in life-threatening situations.

No Navy SEAL has **ever** lost in hand-to-hand combat when correctly applying Jerry's system! And they never will (nor will you) because ... his system is undefeatable!

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Cheap imitators advertise fighter after fighter after fighter — a hodgepodge of unrelated, non-scientific moves. Now they even **lie**, hoping to con you into believing SEALs would lose to these guys. But they know. No one beats a Peterson-trained SEAL.

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Official SEAL SCARS-CFC
Creator Jerry Peterson

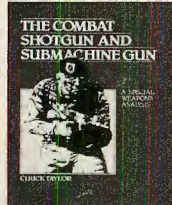
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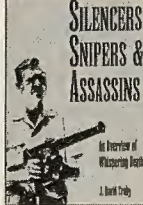
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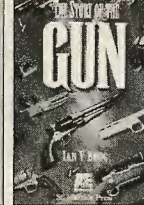
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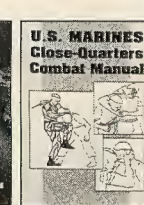
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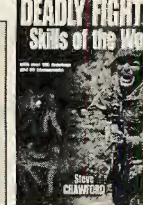
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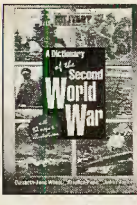
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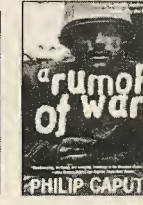
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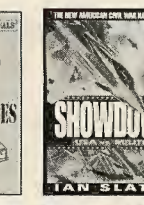
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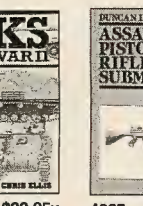
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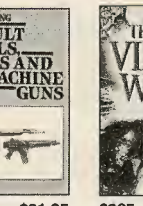
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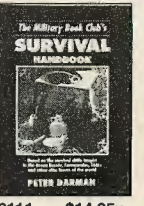
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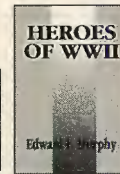
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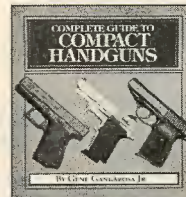
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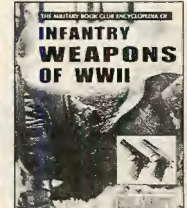
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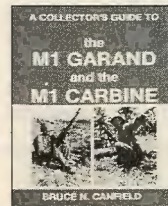
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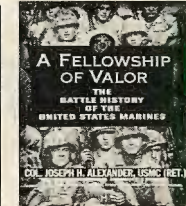
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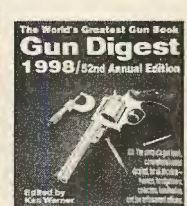
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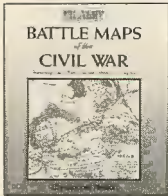
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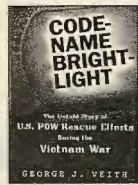
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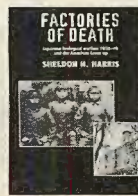
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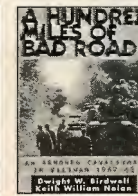
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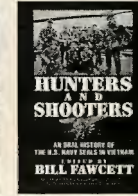
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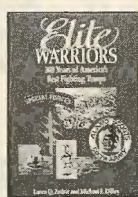
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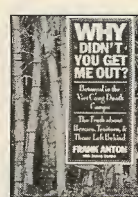
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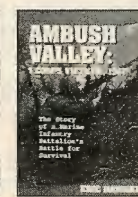
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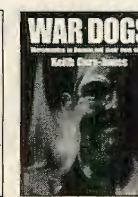
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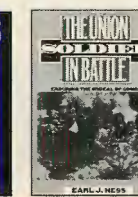
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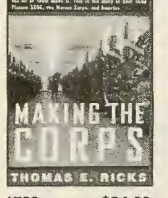
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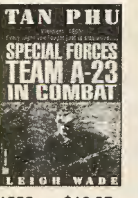
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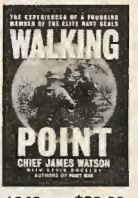
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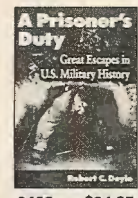
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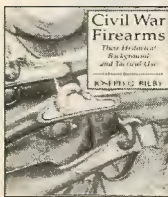
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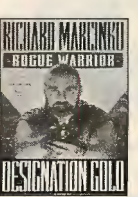
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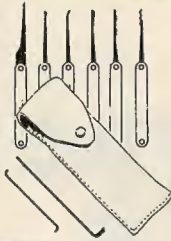
This deluxe yet compact kit features 11 of the most commonly used tools. Comes in a slim cowhide leather case for discreet undercover operatives. As a special bonus, a 5-piece set of warded picks is included. A 16-piece set total. Also included, a copy of "Lockpicking Simplified." Receive all this at a low price of Pix 13 \$42.95



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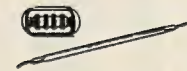
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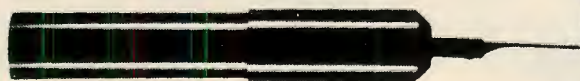


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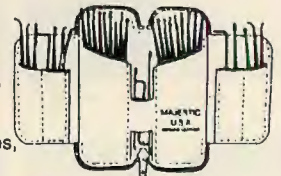
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machine guns were fired off mounts of this type.

So-called "soft" (or "flex") cradle systems were first used in substantial quantities by the Germans in World War II on the tripods designed for the MG34 and subsequently the MG42 GPMGs. Most often, incorporating a spring and/or hydraulic buffer system, soft mounts are designed to absorb a substantial amount of the recoil impulse generated during burst fire. If the tripod is properly sandbagged, this will reduce the size of the group of trajectories formed by a single burst, and called the cone of fire by machine gunners. In turn, this will diminish the size of the beaten zone, which is the elliptical pattern formed by the bullets as they strike the ground. By this means, the accuracy potential and hit probability at longer ranges are enhanced. The gun's components are also subject to less mechanical stress. To a considerable degree, soft mounts overcome the lightweight GPMG's disadvantages as a long-range, sustained-fire support weapon.

The most elaborate and complex soft mount I have ever seen is the one I own as a tripod system for my MG3. Designed for the Austrian version of the MG3 (an improved caliber 7.62x51mm variant of the MG42), called the MG74-3, this tripod, manufactured by Steyr, serves as an incredible monument to the Teutonic obsession with complexity. The gun can be mounted on this tripod with, or without, the buttstock assembly in place. On the right side, a handle bar with a spring-loaded trigger grip that interfaces with the gun's trigger, permits the gun to be fired more easily. A bracket on the left side of the cradle was designed for installation of an optical sight. The elevation controls, also on the left side, are oversize and bulky, but provide for extremely precise adjustments, that can be instantly locked in place. By pivoting the lock lever to the right, the gun can be free traversed along the entire length of its traversing bar. When locked, a knob on either side of the T&E mechanism can be used for more exact traverse adjustments.

If you are extremely good at jigsaw puzzles, the MG74-3 tripod can be turned into an anti-aircraft mount, although an additional

component is required to do so. There are two pads on the front leg to protect the aching back of the poor wretch assigned to carry this nefarious device. Clumsy, heavy (about 35 pounds), unnecessarily complex and possessing dozens of sharp protrusions to jab the unwary operator, this tripod, although quite rare in the United States, should be consigned to a collector's den or on the range with recreational shooters. There is no place for it on my battlefield.

BMG AA Extension

These were once as common as fence posts. No more. AA extensions for the M1917AI tripod have almost all been sucked up into private collections and now rarely appear with a "for sale" sign on them. Inserted into the tripod's pintle, with the gun cradle mounted on top of it, the Browning machine gun AA extension — actually little more than a steel pipe — elevates the gun another 26 inches above the ground.

Developed sometime before World War 11, when planes flew at much slower speeds than they do now, the BMG AA extension was never more than marginal in usefulness. First of all, the .30-06 cartridge is usually not very effective against aircraft. Secondly, the Browning .30- caliber machine guns, with cyclic rates of only 550 rpm, are too slow firing for most anti-aircraft applications. And, finally, even when the tripod legs are sandbagged, the gun is quite wobbly on the AA extension and, as a consequence, the cone of fire is enlarged to an unacceptable degree.

With a M1917AI BMG mounted on top of it, together with an AA ring sight around the water jacket, a wooden ammo box and a water can and hose, the AA extension helps create an impressive display for collectors. But, its only function today is with recreational machine gun shooters, who firing of their inflatable toilet seats would like to stand for a bit while they blaze away at bathtubs and refrigerators.

Snub-Nosed Bren Gun

To me, the Bren is the finest magazine-fed LMG ever fielded, bar

Continued on page 72

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Warthog #1247

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#1214 Black Ka-Bar & Sheath

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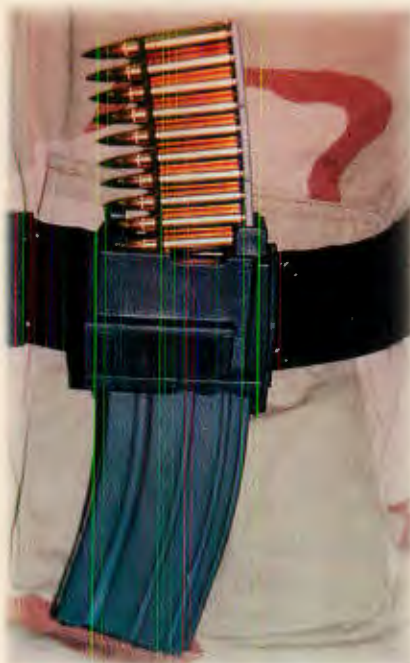
#1247 Warthog

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Otis' new M40A1 Sniper and M16 cleaning systems are probably as good as it gets for a have-it-with-you cleaning kit. Used by Army, SpecOps, FBI and DEA personnel, and in Alaska this fall by SOF's Dwight Swift on a caribou hunt, the various iterations of the Otis kits are complete. They feature various diameter annular brushes plus offset and rod's-end brushes to clean every part — even an appropriate assortment of screwdrivers and pin punches, solvents, patches and lubricant-preservatives. Plus a complete booklet on the how-to and why-for of cleaning a firearm. All in a quality belt pouches.

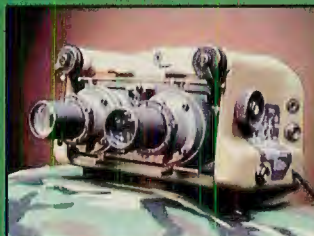


This is the good stuff. Write: Otis Technology Inc., Dept. SOF, Box 582, Lyons Falls, NY 13368; phone: 800-OTIS-GUN or electronically at www.otis-gun.com for ordering information.

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AR-10A2 CARBINE

At the *SOF* hunting camp and orgy of test and evaluation last fall, Mark Westrom of Armalite brought some class-act rifles. Here, former SEAL Harry Humphries, technical adviser for the *SOF, Inc.* TV series, and Tim Abell, a former Ranger who plays Benny Ray Riddle on the tube, examine Armalite's new 7.62x51mm NATO AR-10A2 carbine — a high-quality instrument that groups better than most out-of-the-box bolt-action rifles. The new Armalites are all-new, all-American, and guaranteed for life.

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BROWNELLS' ULTIMATE WISHBOOK

Brownells has been doing right by their customers for more than 50 years: This writer has been a customer and fan of theirs for more

than 40 of those! I have never dealt with a company who was as good to their customers as Brownells is; from how fast and accurately they ship your order to the extremes they go to ensure you are pleased with the transaction.

Their prices have always been favorable, their staff knowledgeable (as in, gunsmiths call to ask questions), their dealings honorable, their products selected for quality. Over the years, this writer has sold to them and bought from them; they are simply as good as it gets. The only way Brownells could get better would be to get *bigger*.

Guess what? *They have!* Their new catalog is a whopping 278 pages — the biggest in their 57-year history. They now feature factory parts from Colt, Remington, EMF and Hartford and, as we go to press, are getting ready to announce several more factories online for parts. They have more than 20,000 items in stock, from gunsmithing tools and shooting accessories, to hot-rod items, to trick out your AR-15, or shotgun; they have cowboy-action gear, scopes and mounts for your rifle — and all supplies for metal refinishing or engraving, or mounting or finishing a new stock.

Their huge new catalog is only \$3.75 — refundable with your first order — and it even comes with discount coupons for some great books. They make ordering very easy. You can call, or write, or FAX; pay for your catalog or order via Master/Visa/Discover or COD, or send 'em a check. You owe it to yourself to link up with the most user-friendly company in U.S. history.

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First the P-11 Pistol. Now the SUB-9 Rifle



The SUB-9 is a semi-automatic rifle for the 9 mm Luger cartridge. By changing the grip assembly the SUB-9 will accept most double column high capacity handgun magazines.

By rotating the barrel the SUB-9 can instantly be reduced to a size of 16 x 7 inches. The reapplication of the barrel to shooting position can be achieved in less than a second.

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I Was There

Text & Photos by Richard L. Sherrow

“T minus 60 seconds and counting ... five-five ... minus fifty ... minus four-five ... DELAY ... DELAY ... Hold Fire!” “Damn,” I thought to myself, “here we go again.”

While delays and holds were nothing unusual here at White Sands Missile Range (WSMR), this one could well screw up our whole schedule.

It had been a long January day in 1980 on the high New Mexico desert, and we were past ready to get to work. As the supervisor of the WSMR Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) unit I was at the standby point, waiting out the launch count down with the rest of my team. We were waiting for the “hot warhead” test-firing of the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) and I was beginning to worry about the winds picking up.

The current test called for a “twelve-pack” shot. All 12 launch tubes of the mobile MLRS were to ripple-fire and, after a flight of several miles, dispense their high-explosive bomblet payload into the Stallion Warhead Impact Target (WIT) area. After impact, the EOD team would be the first in to locate, mark and dispose of any unexploded bomblets. After EOD had finished our job the data-recording team would be allowed into the WIT to chart warhead performance.

It was the windy season and that worried me. It was during the first tests of the MLRS (then designated the GSRS—Ground Support Rocket System) that we discovered how much of a factor the wind would be in EOD operations involving dud-fired M-42 submunitions.

Each MLRS rocket warhead contained 644 M-42 High Explosive Armor Penetrating (HEAP) submunitions. Approximately 1 1/2-inches in diameter and 2 1/2-inches tall, the M-42 is designed to be dispensed from an artillery projectile or rocket in flight. As it is ejected, a 4-inch long nylon ribbon unfurls from the top of the bomblet fuse, in the process unscrewing the arming screw/firing pin and allowing the detonator slider to align with the needle-sharp firing pin. On impact, the firing pin impinges the detonator, setting off the bomblet. Unless it fails to explode. In that case, one of two conditions normally exist. First, the firing pin is imbedded in the detonator and the slightest movement can cause the bomblet to explode. Or, the firing pin is hovering a scant 1 or 2 millimeters above the detonator and the slightest movement can cause it to strike the detonator, detonating the bomblet.



(top) Firing of the Ground Support Rocket System (GSRS) at White Sands Missile Range, N.M. The GSRS was the forerunner of the Dud M-42 High Explosive Armor Penetrating (HEAP) submunition from the MLRS. (left) White nylon arming ribbon has been burned by the explosion of other bomblets. (right) Dud M-42 bomblet prepared for destruction by White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) U.S. Army EOD team.

Into The Valley

The first time the MLRS/M-42 combination was fired at WSMR we encountered scores of dud bomblets in the impact area. No sooner had we entered the site and began to mark the duds, the wind began to pick up. Although there was no mention in the ordnance safety pubs of this creating a hazardous situation, my sixth sense told me to get myself and my team the hell out of the area. The next morning, we reentered the area and found that dozens of the marked bomblets had exploded during the previous night's wind and rain storm. Add a new precaution to the books.

Back at Stallion WIT the countdown resumed: “Three ... two ... one ... zero point ... we have launch!” From our standby point we had a clear view of the impact area. In less than a minute we saw a dark puff high in the air as the first rocket dispersed, its deadly payload over the target. In seconds, hundreds of firefly-like sparks erupted, kicking up little clouds of dust, soon followed by the staccato *pop-pop-pop* of exploding submunitions. One after another the rockets spilled their payloads over the impact area.

“Nine ... ten ... eleven ...” Then silence. Where was number twelve? Was there a misfire? A hang-fire? What?

Moments later the Range Control radio came to life, “All mission elements stand by. We have a situation!” At launch the folded fins of the last rocket failed to deploy. As a result, the now-unstable rocket began to wobble causing the thin-skinned warhead to begin tearing itself apart. Now, ballistically unstable and breaking apart, the rocket, still miles short of target, was falling toward earth, raining debris, and rapidly arming bomblets in its wake.

Things couldn't get worse? They did. Instead of falling harmlessly onto a barren patch of desert, the rocket fell onto Coma Site. Only a few short miles from the famous Trinity Site, home of the world's first atomic detonation, Coma Site was the lone manned-camera site under the rocket's flight path. There were three civilian technicians at Coma Site when the rocket slammed into the ground just yards from the main camera dome. In the seconds before impact the techs barely had time to dive under their trucks, praying they would be cover enough. With bomblets exploding around them, no one was hit by flying frag. Call it a miracle, the grace of God, or fate, they were alive — scared shitless — but alive.

Huddled in the camera dome, with scores of unexploded bomblets all around them, the civilians were trapped in the middle of a minefield, and then the damn wind started to blow!

A rescue had to be mounted *now*. EOD was up to bat and the clock was running. With wind gusts of over 30 mph due at any time, there could be no waiting. Turning to my team, as corny as it now sounds, I asked for volunteers for this risk-your-ass mission. I may as well have asked if anyone wanted free beer.

With time and the elements now our enemy, we couldn't wait for an armored rescue vehicle to arrive. By the time it made it there might not be anyone alive. In less time than it takes to tell it, we were lining the bed and cab of the EOD Dodge pick-up with dozens of armored vests and barreling for Coma Site.

Prior to venturing into the site I'd contacted the trapped techs,

Continued on page 33

It's just hands-down the most brutally-effective (yet simple to master) system ever revealed to civilians!

Vicious Russian "Top Secret" Spec Op Military Fighting System *Finally* Revealed By Defiant "Underdog" U.S. Businessman!

This exciting news is going to blow the lid off the "self-defense" industry. Due to some unbelievably complex (international) breakthroughs...

I Now Have Videotape Of Russian Spec Op Unarmed Combat Secrets The U.S. Military Spent Millions Trying To Steal!

And the U.S. military *still* doesn't have these amazing fighting secrets! You *cannot* find a qualified teacher of these vicious hand-to-hand fighting secrets *ANYWHERE* in the United States... not in the military Special Forces, not in the FBI or CIA Virginia compounds, not in *any* of the high-tech "foreign experiment" dojos around "Area 51" in Nevada (the most *secret* military installation in the world). This stuff is hands-down *the* best-kept secret among "insiders" in the world of *serious* combat.

But I found him — the ONLY former-Russian Special Forces "super-soldier" willing to reveal the fighting techniques that made Soviet elite soldiers the most *feared* fighters on the planet. Navy SEALs, DELTA soldiers, Rangers... they're tough guys, but even *they* admit they *NEVER* want to have to face anyone trained in the brutal killing arts of SPETSNAZ. (SPETSNAZ is Russian for "Special Forces", but the organization is actually *more* elite than even our SEALs — only *one* out of 3,000 Soviet spec op soldiers ever reaches this level... and *NO ONE* but these "elite-of-the-elite" soldiers in Russia ever gets *this* advanced training! Ninety-six percent of the *Soviet* military doesn't even know these secret killing arts exist — due to *intensive* government coverups! Even the more-famous KGB agents — Russia's version of the Nazi Gestapo — are *terrified* of SPETSNAZ operatives and their skills.)

The guy I found is named Vladimir Vasiliev, and I had to travel to Toronto, Canada to see him — he won't come see me here in the States. (Let's just say he's a little "cautious", due to his reputation and escape from Soviet Russia.) Finding this former Russian "super-soldier" meant risking my ass with some *serious* international intrigue. Fortunately, I still have several "deep contacts" in the U.S. military special forces... and when Vladimir finally decided to "go public" in a big way, he sent word to me through a Ranger veteran in northern Idaho.

And let me tell you, this is the most *important* "find" in all my years of working with world-class fighting arts. (I've been *swamped* with calls from cops, U.S. special forces soldiers, federal agents and street fighters about this tape... *even though it's not for sale yet* — word has slipped out among the insiders *already*.) You see, Vladimir wasn't just a Spec Op soldier... no... Vladimir was so "high up" he taught this astonishing Russian fighting system to other SPETSNAZ agents (and was, in fact, one of their "specialized" trainers)... and then *led* them in the most chilling and dangerous missions I've *ever* been briefed on (all *still* classified Top Secret by the Soviet Army)! (My Ranger contact, who did *two* frontline tours in *Vietnam*, was *equally* blown away listening to these bloody tales.)

Vladimir is so tight-lipped about his past it took me *6 months* to get this deal together... but I *did* it. And now... because of these jerk-off "black baggers" harassing me at home...

I Have To Move Fast To Make Sure These Amazing Combat Secrets Are Available (And *Stay* Available) To Civilians Like You!

What I'm doing is *not* illegal... but you know my little company has been stopped *before* by "high up" interference despite being in the right. (These "higher ups" want to keep this information *only* for cops and soldiers, and *out* of the hands of civilians like you and me. Last year we held 3 exciting "hands on" gun-and-fighting workshops hosted by veteran Navy SEALs and former DELTA officers... and these workshops were *stopped* by mysterious, *powerful* interference!) Now, dammit, I love this country... but sometimes a man is forced to just stand up and say "ENOUGH!" I don't care what *anyone* says — the Cold War is over, and if these "top secret" Russian hand-to-hand techniques are now "fair game" to be shared with you... well, that's what I'm gonna do. And if I'm putting my *life* in danger doing something that is *guaranteed* by the First Amendment... well... sometimes you gotta show a little courage to do the right thing.

But... with *your* help... I see an *EASY* way out of this... if you act *fast*.

Up to today, *very few* people have seen these tapes (or even know they exist). And, as *soon* as I can, I want to get these tapes

into the hands of as many "civilians" as possible. I've ordered a limited number of "special" sets of these tapes prepared, and by next weekend, I want them *all* in the hands of people like you. Once this happens...

The Cat Will Be Out Of The Bag!

There's no law against *owning* these tapes... or selling them. The only way anyone can stop this deal is to stop *me* from getting them out. Once the tapes are in the hands of the "public" (meaning non-military people like you), the game is *over*. That's why I am selling these special packages at *less than half* what they're worth!

And you don't get the "edited" version of the tapes, either — no, what I'm sending you is the same *un-edited* version that I have in my *own* home for training. *Plus*, I'm throwing in an *extra bonus video* — this extra footage really "*pushes the line*" — it contains Russian military "dirty tricks" about fighting with improvised weapons. This made sure that SPETSNAZ soldiers were never farther away than their belt, jacket, wallet or even a simple magazine from possessing an amazing weapon that can *defeat and disarm* even a skilled attacker holding a gun or knife on them. (This is incredible information I've never seen before from all my years in this business. Even professional soldiers and cops are astounded at the Russians' ability to create weapons out of virtually nothing during a streetfight.)

Plus, you get the most wild-ass guarantee I've ever offered *anyone* at any time — you can order these tapes, watch them, train with them... for an entire *4 months*... and, if you're not satisfied, for *any* reason, just send 'em back for a complete refund of your entire "insider" price. *AND*... you get to keep that special Russian "*improvised weapons*" *bonus video footage*, no matter what.

What's more... I'm even paying (out of my *own* pocket) for *all* your shipping and handling costs — about *\$16 worth* of postage-plus. That means you get the *most outrageous* discount price available... without *any* risk at all... *plus* the chance to see the "unedited" insider tapes... of the *HOTTEST* fighting secrets videos now in existence!

This will cost me dearly — *no way* am I going to make up my initial expense of flying a crew into Canada to shoot these tapes... not selling this huge package of stuff at *50% off*... but it's *worth* it... because... I have dedicated my life to providing this kind of

important information to civilians.

Now... I realize all this sounds like some weird "spy" drama you'd see on television. But this *is* how the "real world" works. Most men in my position would just close up shop, and not try to ruffle anyone's feathers. I'm not like that. I love being an American, and it feels *good* to do the right thing... even if I'm taking an *enormous risk*.

You, of course, risk absolutely nothing.

But, man, are you ever going to be blown away by these tapes Vladimir made! If you value your self-defense (and the *protection* of your family and loved ones)... you have just discovered the *easiest*... yet *most effective* way to beat *any* attacker (of any size), anywhere, *anytime*... even if you are surprised, outnumbered, or *bare-handed* against a weapon!

Here's why *everyone* who's seen it is so excited about this new fighting system:

- ➔ There are *NO* moves to memorize or practice — the *entire* system works by using your *natural movements* (and just "lethalizing" them with a few "twists"). This is the *only* system I've ever seen where you look like you're having relaxed FUN kicking serious ass!
- ➔ No one has a *clue* how defend or *attack* this system — even the handful of U.S. fighting experts who have seen it *can't* find a way to beat it! There are no "stances", so you're *never* unprepared... and *cannot be taken by surprise!*
- ➔ It's so ingeniously *simple*, you can MASTER it in the *shortest time humanly possible!* (Russian spec op soldiers spent *minimum* time in training — a *fraction* of what SEALs do — and yet the Russians *quickly* attained *better* hand-to-hand fighting skills!) There is *NO* other fighting art you can learn in a shorter time *anywhere* on the planet!
- ➔ You *don't* need to be in shape, or have fast reflexes, or *any* previous training at all — in fact, being buffed-out and having athletic reactions won't help you master this any faster at all! (Vladimir loves training women, first-time fighters, and people you might be tempted to call "weak" or "small".) In fact... this style is so *fluid and natural* that it easily adapts to *your* particular strengths and...

Instantly Eliminates Your Weaknesses!

You learn it fast, it's *easy* to use, and yet even *casual* training in it will allow you to rub the noses of bigger, meaner, and more skilled black belt/streetfighting thugs into the

dirt. It's so *deceptively dangerous*, people will think you're using *magic* to knock opponents out! Sounds like a Hollywood bullshit movie, doesn't it. Well, it's not. I checked it out — by hiring two expensive "investigative reporters" to see if all this was the truth. Here's what they found:

First, Vladimir is the "real thing." He was a champion boxer and karate competitor in his home town of Tver (2 hours east of Moscow). When he reached the Army, his special talents as a fighter got him placed in officer training with SPETSNAZ. He spent *10 years* with that elite operation, running multiple special missions... including *eleven* deep reconnaissance and POW recoveries *behind enemy lines* (this was during the brutal Afghanistan War — Russia's nightmare version of our Vietnam).

On top of seeing *more* bloody face-to-face combat than any American soldier I've met, Vladimir was so skilled at these special hand-to-hand combat arts that he trained *other* SPETSNAZ operatives, KGB hit-men, Kremlin bodyguards, elite paratroopers and Russian big-city SWAT teams.

But it's *WHAT* he taught that's so interesting. This Russian fighting system is like *NOTHING* you've ever seen or heard about before. There are very good reasons why the U.S. military spent mega-millions of dollars (and *wasted* the lives of good agents) trying to *steal* this amazing system.

First, it's just hands-down the most devastating fighting system anyone's ever seen. (This is *freely admitted* by martial art experts in every discipline.) Second, it's *simple* to master, and *not based on strength or conditioning* — the equivalent of handing you a *loaded revolver* to face an unarmed attacker:

No contest!

Third, there's the amazing "*short cut*" learning process. Russian scientists discovered long ago how to *quickly* "download" even the most vicious training *directly* into your nervous system — so it's *part of who you are*, not just something you've *memorized*. That means, in a fight, while the *other* guy is *thinking* about his next move, you've *already made yours*... and *ended* the fight. (This Russian secret of "training the nervous system directly" has *never* been fully understood by the U.S. military — in fact, Vladimir can't even explain what he does... he only has the *massive evidence of success* to show that what he does works. This *enrages* American scientists — *especially* the ones connected with the Pentagon.)

Fourth, this new system prepares you with physical, psychological and *PSYCHIC* training... stuff our boys haven't even *begun* to understand. Vladimir trained with knives held to his back, fighting live prisoners using *live ammo*, suffering mind-game torture (like being stuffed in a small sewer pipe so tight he could barely *breathe*, and *left* there for long hours)... and — coupled with the devastating

hand-to-hand skills you're also about to learn — it was this training that got these soldiers so tough, so *dangerous*, and so *skilled* that they got through bloody fights victorious and safe.

What's more... it was **GUARANTEED** these elite Russian soldiers would *never* meet a better hand-to-hand fighter...

Anywhere On The Planet!

This system evolved because of Russia's long history of warfare. *Everybody* took a shot at them over the last few thousand years... which meant Russian soldiers had to learn (fast) how to beat black belt Japanese Samurai... razor-swallowing Mongols under Attila the Hun... French savate experts... British boxers... Korean swordsmen... Turkish terrorists... German storm-troopers... and on and on. So they needed a system that would *instantly* adapt to *any* fighting style you faced... and *instantly beat* it.

Russia didn't have a "standing" army of professional soldiers until recently, either — so this fighting system also had to be *learned quickly* by farmers and factory workers... and *mastered* by them... so they could go into battle (often the *next day*) and *win* against superior numbers and better-armed *professional* warriors. What's more, once learned, this system had to be *so simple to remember*, and so *natural* (using *only* those moves you do naturally, *everyday*, to walk, wash, eat, breathe, etc.) that these "farmer-soldiers" wouldn't forget it, *even if it was 20 years until the next battle!*

The amazing thing is, my researchers discovered that *civilians* who learned (even *casually*) this system seemed to absorb *all* the attributes of the "super soldiers". Here are just a few stories we learned:

- One young Canadian who Vladimir trained for a short time is so *small*, and so "fragile" looking (5'6", 140 pounds soaking wet) you might mistake him for a *girl* from across the street. Yet... he's now *banned* from competition fighting because he *hurt* all his opponents too seriously! (Black belts don't *like* to get their noses broken by a "boy" who doesn't seem to actually *have* any fighting skills they can identify!)
- Another Canadian guy named Mike Sapiz (5'9", *maybe* 160 pounds) ran afoul of 7 *beefy bouncers* in a European nightclub — the biggest one was a bodybuilder with 17 inch arms and a *serious* attitude problem... but the "fight" took about 8 seconds — Mike took the big jerk down and held him there, helpless, for the other bouncers to see, and they backed off, all their macho attitude suddenly *gone*. Mike's *life* had been threatened, and his training with Vladimir literally *forced* him to react in the most brutally effective way.
- Another Canadian (James Pomerants) was vacationing in the Caribbean, minding his own business, when the guy at the next table pulled out a knife and

waved it in a woman's face. No one else in the bar moved... but James *took the knife away* and "convinced" the wildman to calm down with a nerve-shattering move *no one saw*. His brief Russian System training just "leapt" out of him, *automatically and savagely*.

- A 32-year-old cop arrived at a scene just like the Rodney King incident — this crack-crazed thug wasn't fazed by pepper spray or nightsticks, and was terrorizing *3 armed policemen*. He stepped in and put the mad-dog on the ground *without hesitation*... using a *simple move* he had only *recently* learned from Vladimir. (Needless to say, those other cops are now among those hounding me for these new training videos.)
- A Russian soldier (name withheld) had been parachuted *behind enemy lines* in Afghanistan, and hadn't seen food or water for days. He was *exhausted*, and struggling with a 130-pound pack of explosives — a *stiff breeze* would have taken him down. Afghani mountain warriors attacked with Khyber swords (long, curved blades as sharp as razors)... no contest. The Afghani's are feared the world over for their *viciousness* and courage and *delight in killing*... but *this* time they had picked the wrong "easy target". This soldier was trained in the Russian System, and even dead-tired, hampered by 130 pounds of metal and leather, starved and surprised... he disposed of the attacker in *seconds*.

It's amazing, too, what happens when "ordinary" people train with Vladimir. **Businessmen** suddenly find themselves *influencing* people with their confidence and intuition... smaller guys who would never otherwise consider a bodyguard job suddenly *excel* at it... and... without a word said... suddenly *no one* wants to get in your way in the street. It's like "loading up" your body and your confidence with...

Mysterious Power That Others Can Sense In You!

What Vladimir does is teach your *body* to "think"... this training goes *straight* to your nervous system, and operates *automatically* whenever you're in danger! This ain't JKD by any measure... yet what Vladimir teaches is *more* "in tune" with Bruce Lee's philosophy than *any* other art now practiced anywhere! (Stay fluid... no memorized moves... only use what *works*, regardless of tradition... *everything* Bruce Lee promised has shown up in this amazing new system.)

Here are some *details* of what you're about to learn:

- Where to find the "handles" on your opponent so you can lead him into your elbows and knees and *inflict more immediate damage* than any karate kick or ju jitsu take-down known!

- How to deliver a "punch" (without *ever* forming a classic "fist") that will do more devastation than hitting your opponent with a *hammer*! (You'll look like a blur of motion, but in reality you're only making very simple, *natural* movements — *easily learned* — which you can use *regardless* of your fitness level or body type!)
- The most *unique* knee work you've ever seen... allowing you to *dominate* attackers *without putting your drink down!* Devastating, effective... *perfect* for tight places, or when your arms have been trapped (or, as the Russians learn, *wounded!*)
- How to unleash the natural "whips" in your body to *take out* even attackers who have advanced, high-end athletic quick reactions! (They can be *twice* as fast as you and *still* not be able to defend themselves from the brain-numbing blows you deliver!)
- How to use your *belly* to deflect formal and street-level strikes — even if you've got a *large* gut! (You've *never* seen a fighting art that allows you to be *so out of shape, and still deadly!*)
- Special "one-strike" fight-enders especially developed by the Russians to be used when you are exhausted, drained of energy, even wounded! (You *only* want to know *this* vicious stuff for when your *life is in danger!* The *games* are over...)
- New *target areas* you *never knew existed* that will *instantly* leave your attacker numb and useless! (A simple "tap"... and he's *limp!*)
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- How Russians have learned to "parlay" the energy of *getting hit* (in a surprise attack), so your "reply" strike *absorbs* all the power and *returns* it — just like an electric current making a loop and burning a hole in the original plug! (Pro fighters have been searching for this secret for *years!*)
- Special strikes that will let a 12-year-old kid *shred* a bodybuilder's gridiron stomach like *melted cheese!*
- An ingenious way to use your *teeth* (that could *only* come from the Russians) on hidden "pressure points" that will leave your opponent *helpless!*

- How to use special "psi" training techniques to quickly "recondition" your nervous system *so you don't feel pain during a fight!*
- How to turn the fact you're shorter, smaller, fatter or *weaker* than your opponent into an *advantage!*
- *Where to look with your eyes* during a confrontation — the Russians discovered it's *NOT* a direct stare that gives you an advantage... almost *all* professional fighters eventually do this intuitively, and now *you'll* have the secret!
- The incredible Russian "*Trinity Shot*" — a rapid-fire *explosion* of hands and feet that no one can defend against! (And yet it's *simple* to learn, completely adaptable to your body type and level of fitness!)
- How to use ingenious "test kicks" to find out *how scared* your opponent is! (He may look confident and tough, but you'll know the *truth* in seconds.)
- How to become "mugger-proof" by learning how to easily turn *unexpected attacks* (even from behind your back) into instant *wins!*
- How to knock someone *completely off balance*... by *spitting* at them! (Yes, there's a trick to it, but you only need to see it *once* to understand how to use it effectively!)
- Why the "breathing secrets" of all Oriental martial arts *don't work* in a real fight... and how to use your *natural breathing* to add 400% more power to your every move in a dangerous situation! (This secret explains why Russian fighters *laugh* so much when they fight!)
- How to stay relaxed (literally, loose as a goose) during the most dangerous attacks... allowing any *fear* to simply *dissipate* into thin air! (Quickly, you'll learn how to *never* "feel" fear again!)
- How to make fancy black belt kickers look *silly* by simply "*tripping*" them up!
- How to take down a trained fighter with a *5-inch hip move* (used by elite soldiers who have been captured and *tied up!*)
- The most devastating "finishing moves" you've ever seen — easy to learn, *utterly final for ending a fight fast!*
- The famous "Tregubetz" takedown move that scares the *crap* out of ju jitsu ground fighters!
- How to open his fist and *remove* the knife as if from a child!
- The 3 "mind-game" secrets that even *tiny* Russians use to become the *best bodyguards in the world!*
- *Everything the Russians know about body language during a fight* — secrets that will give you a 100% advantage over *anyone* who's never been told these critical facts! (Find out who's more scared, who's more skilled, who's going down *first!*)
- Totally *unknown* (in the U.S.) knee strikes that will give you an *instant advantage* over better-skilled fighters! (*Especially* in tight places, like a crowded bar or a narrow alley

or between parked cars.)

- *Filthy Russian "dirty tricks"* that will turn cocky black belt fighters into *unconscious lumps of meat at your feet!* (You won't believe these "one-second discussion enders" until you see them for yourself!)

And lots more. In fact, I've made sure your "special" set of tapes includes a Bonus section on "Improvised Weapons"... where you'll learn: **How to make a instant set of "brass knuckles"** with a magazine and four quarters! (*Better* than a brick or baseball bat for inflicting pain and damage against multiple attackers — includes specific "best targets" map for strikes.)... **How to use your wallet to take out a knife-wielding attacker!** (Perfect "dirty trick" for turning tables on a mugger.)... **How to use a credit card as a knife!** (Inflict wounds as savage as an *Afghani Khyber sword!*)... **How to use your jacket to take away a knife, to strangle multiple opponents** (astounding technique, easy to master!), and to literally tie-up a conscious attacker so he can't get free!... **11 ways to use your belt more effectively than a knife or bat!** (Plus, the Russian Army "official" way to use a belt to truss up an opponent so he can't move, can't get away... and will go anywhere you want him to go! Perfect info for taking care of attackers *after* you've subdued them!)... **How to make a "noose" out of almost anything...** to make sure your opponent *stays* down after you've put him on the ground! (Answers the question, finally, of *what to do until the cops arrive!*)

Look... I could go on for another 20 pages... but if you aren't convinced by now, *you never will be.* I wouldn't be trusting you with all this hot information if I didn't have a pretty good idea you'd be very interested. I've done all I can to bring these amazing video tapes to you. It cost a small fortune to fly a professional crew up there, do the 3-camera shoot (on top equipment), *clear Customs with unlabeled bags,* and get the

master-copies made. I've slashed the price to 50% of what everyone else will pay (plus arranged for you to get a *longer* guarantee than anyone gets), thrown in every "goodie" available... *and I have your special set of tapes and manual right here in my office.*

All I need is your okay to send it out.

Here's what you need to do now: Call my office at **1-800-899-8153** (Dept. RC-29) and tell whoever answers you're giving "clearance" for us to ship the special set of "Unedited Russian System" videos we've put aside for you. The price is \$99 (that's half of what everyone expected to have to pay)... but, if you call right away (within 11 days), I'll even pay for your shipping and handling — *another \$16 savings.* (And you'll *still* get *rush delivery.*)

Nevertheless, you get the *SAME* "unedited" version I have *myself* to train with at home. Later, when we go to the "general" public, we'll have to sanitize the tapes quite a bit. (The camera crew and the sound guys all insisted on *this* version for themselves, too... the *FIRST* time I've ever had a request like that from a crew. These guys are jaded... but Vladimir impressed them like *no one else they've ever seen!*) **PLUS...** you get the Bonus section on "Improvised Weapons"... (the same "insider" knowledge the SPETSNAZ "super soldiers" got) — and you can **KEEP** the bonus video *no matter what you decide to do later!* (And, you have 4 months to decide! I'll *personally* make sure you get an immediate refund.)

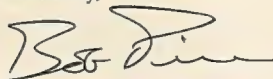
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people waiting for your call (use the special toll-free line: **1-800-899-8153.**)

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Bob Pierce

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James Pomerants, 37,
professional bodyguard

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"I've developed so much new confidence, that I now routinely fight with guys twice my size. This system teaches you what will work in a streetfight, and you can believe it because Vladimir has so much real-life experience to share!" — **Barry Street, 26**

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Continued from page 28

had them describe their situation and the site layout in detail, advised them of our plan and instructed them to remain in the camera dome and sit tight. The plan was rather straight forward. As Staff Sergeant Ed Pinson drove the truck, Staff Sgt. Brian Hamilton and I would take point, walking off front searching for dud bomblets.

We were approximately 100 meters from the site when Hamilton spotted the first. Seeing it was unarmed, Brian carefully moved it to the side of the dirt path. Just ahead, another M-42, this one armed. Carefully directing Pinson around it, I spotted a third, unarmed, but with the ribbon torn off. To the right, a fluttering white ribbon; the wind, again, was kicking up.

Finally, we reached the camera dome. Off to the left we saw the main impact crater, with dozens of bomblets around its lip. The camera dome, atop a small lava-rock-covered earth mound, matched the size and color as the lethal duds. Damn! Not as futile as searching for a needle in a haystack but close. At least some of the bomblets still had their white arming ribbons attached. Some, but not all. Carrying extra body armor, Hamilton and I inched our way up to the trapped techs.

Once on top of the hill we glanced around and saw white ribbons and bomblets scattered all around us. Damn the wind. With zip time to waste, once inside the camera dome we hurriedly helped the civilians don the vests then retraced our steps to the truck. "Load up, let's get the hell out of here!" We've been lucky.

KA-BOOM!

We flinched. Just to our rear, time had run out, our surroundings were being peppered with razor-edged steel fragments.

The next morning we returned to the site, this time with an ally — a load of ½-pound TNT blocks, along with safety fuse, blasting caps and the entire EOD team. The winds were down and the rescue was successful, but we still had a major EOD operation to sweat.

Carefully searching through the knee-high dry grass, we discovered that during the night several submunitions had been exploded by the windstorm. Continuing on, we located and flagged scores of unexploded M-42s. The main impact crater was a real mess. Approximately 3 feet in diameter, it was packed with hundreds of armed, unarmed and broken-up submunitions. After clearing the trucks and camera trailers from the site we were prepared to begin disposal operations.

Since we already had plenty of safety-fuse lengths capped and ready for regular EOD ops in the WIT area, we placed charges beside each flagged bomblet, then attacked the main crater. Since it would be too dangerous to attempt to excavate the deadly crater, it was decided to rig a cradle assembly over the crater, being careful not to disturb the bomblets, and fill the cradle with TNT, the idea being to direct the blast wave down, thus

Continued on page 72

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ENGAGEMENT (Secure)

Fig. 1a

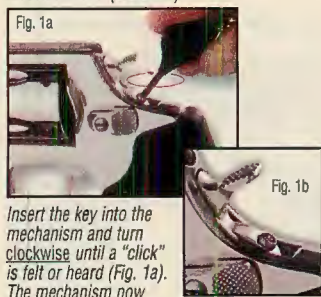


Fig. 1b

Insert the key into the mechanism and turn clockwise until a "click" is felt or heard (Fig. 1a). The mechanism now partially protrudes above the surface of the back of the hammer (Fig. 1b). The revolver's action is locked in place and cannot function.

DISENGAGEMENT (Ready-to-Fire)

Fig. 2a

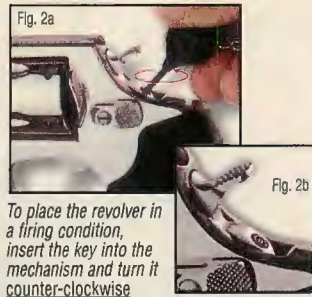


Fig. 2b

To place the revolver in a firing condition, insert the key into the mechanism and turn it counter-clockwise (Fig. 2a). The mechanism is now virtually flush with the back portion of the hammer (Fig. 2b). The revolver can now be fired.



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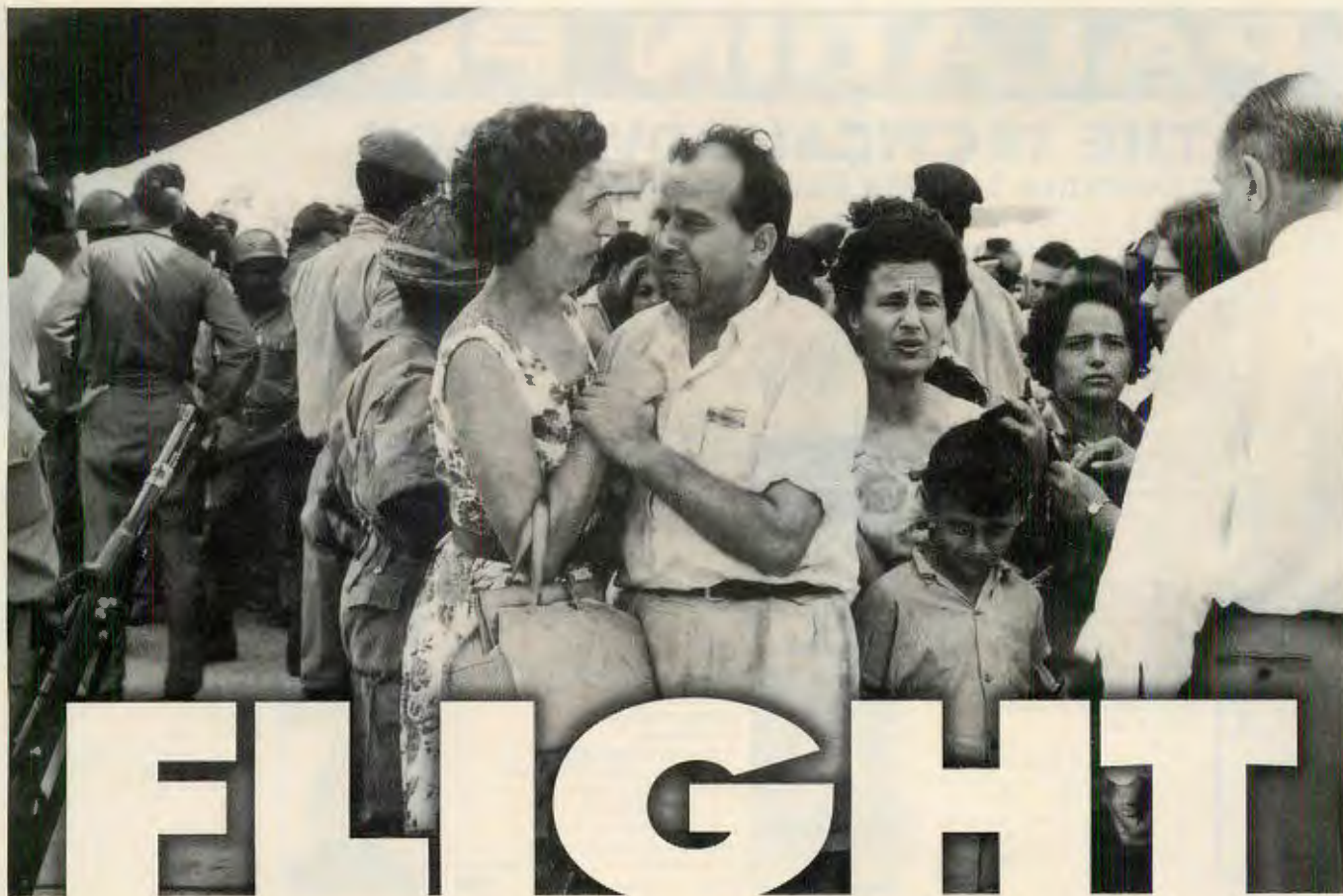
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FLIGHT

of the RED DRAGON

by Rob Krott

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS, COURTESY COL. DONALD R. STROBAUGH, USAF (Ret.)

Dawn broke above the trackless African jungle, heralding a new day for the inhabitants of Stanleyville (now Kisangani) in the former Belgian Congo as five USAF Lockheed C-130 Hercules transport planes appeared on the horizon. The four-engined turboprops dropped airspeed over the city's outskirts, overflying Sabena airport at 700 feet — combat-jump altitude. As

ter on the continent and surrounded by dense jungle, is halfway between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and halfway between Cairo and Capetown. The Congo, past and present, is a dark, foreboding place where witchcraft, cannibalism, and ritual murder are still practiced in a jungle primeval. Joseph Conrad described it in *Heart of Darkness* as "... traveling back to the earliest beginnings

through an elaborate ceremony to confer powerful *dawa* (medicine) on them.

The *dawa* would make them impervious to bullets. They only had to wave palm fronds and chant "*mai, mai*" (water, water) and look straight ahead ... of course, if a Simba were killed it was because he failed to follow the witch doctor's instructions. Clad in bits and pieces of military uniforms or wearing only tattered shorts, many were right out of the bush and still in animal skins. The Simbas, sporting a bewildering array of headgear — ANC (*Armée Nationale Congolaise*) caps, cowboy hats, steel helmets left behind by the U.N. troops (some even wore lamp shades or women's hats), were both frightful and comical in appearance. A few had liberated some silk panties from a lady's boudoir and wore them over their trousers.

Vachel Lindsay's poem, *The Congo*,

American Black Ops In Darkest Africa

the lead aircraft approached Sabena's main runway its navigator, First Lieutenant John Coble, yelled "Green light!" into the intercom. Co-pilot Captain Robert Kitchen reached down for the control panel near his right armrest and switched the paratrooper jump-warning lights from standby-red to go-green. It was exactly 0600 hours, 24 November 1964, and Operation Dragon Rouge, the meticulously planned airborne assault by the Belgian Para-Commando Regiment on Stanleyville was a GO.

Stanleyville, situated almost dead-cen-

of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest." It is deepest, darkest Africa. It is the Congo.

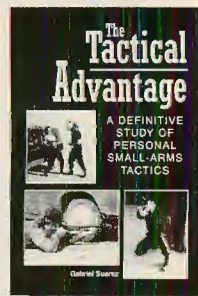
On 5 August 1964, the Popular Army of Liberation, *Simbas*, of the self-commissioned "General" Nicolas Olenga, a former postal clerk, seized Stanleyville, the third largest city in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Their name being Swahili for "lion," the Simbas were a phenomenon that could only transpire in the Congo. Witch doctors put the Simba recruits

(above) European and American expatriate community — in essence the infrastructure — of former Belgian Congo huddles on tarmac before evacuation from Stanleyville aboard American military planes. The Belgian-led rescue effort was too late for many others.

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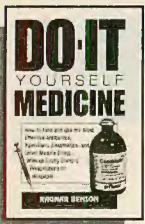


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by Kenn Abaygo

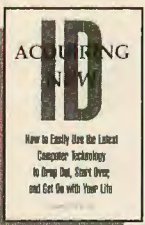
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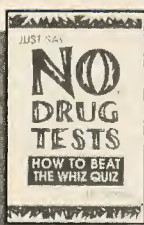
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Captain Donald R. Strobaugh visits with Belgian para-commandos on Ascension Island, 21 November 1964 — three days before the jump on Stanleyville. Note the obviously teenaged paras on Strobaugh's left. Most of the para-commandos were draftees with less than one year in the army.

paints an *apropos* picture:

*"Then along that riverbank
A thousand miles
Tattooed cannibals danced in files;
Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust
song
And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan
gong."*

The Simbas quickly routed the ANC, little more than uniformed rabble who also believed in sorcery. The ANC ran in terror from Simbas preceded by their palm-frond waving tribal witch doctors. ANC troops were not known for their courage, nor their marksmanship. Convinced that it is the noise of the weapon that kills, many fired their rifles with their eyes closed. This undoubtedly reinforced the Simba belief in *dawa*.

Pick The Ripened Plum

The Simbas had seized much of the Congo, terrorizing and slaughtering thousands of Congolese, as well as dozens of white missionaries, priests, nuns, and expatriates. There were approximately 1,600 foreigners (mostly Europeans) from more than 20 nations in Stanleyville; about 30 were Americans, including U.S. Consul Michael Hoyt and four other members of the U.S. Consulate. Despite offers of evacuation by both the Belgian and American consulates,



(above) Moise Tshombe, president of the Congo, who nearly lost the country to Simba rebels. (above, right) Major Roger Hardenne of Para Regiment HQ, and paratroops loaded up on motor-tricycles. Weapons are Belgian-made 9mm Vigneron M2 submachine guns. (right) Then-Captain Strobaugh in ad-hoc tropical uniform, on tarmac with Belgian FN FAL rifle and Cuban-mercenary piloted B-26K support aircraft. Now 67, Strobaugh, retired in 1976, still jumps (3,300 logged jumps from 66 different aircraft, 47 foreign parachute badges).

the majority (Belgians) stayed. Many had survived the Katanga secession chaos of 1960-1963 and Antoine Gizenga's short-lived 1961 secessionist regime in Stanleyville and felt they could weather this storm as well. Many would soon come to regret their decision. Hoyt and the other American diplomats were thrown into the Central Prison while other whites were held communally in hotels. The Simbas began making anti-American statements on Radio Stanleyville and issuing threats of execution if the United States did not withdraw all support (much of it imagined) from the Congo.

The Congo was no stranger to trouble. Shortly after independence, in 1960, there was widespread political unrest, leading to the Katanga secession of Moise Tshombe with the aid of white mercenaries under the command of a South African, Major Michael "Mad Mike" Hoare. U.N. intervention and the ensuing "peace" were short-



lived, however, when a rebellion led by Pierre Mulele, a Maoist-Chinese-trained guerrilla, broke out in the Kwilu area near Kikwit in January 1964. A second rebellion headed by clerk-turned-politician, Gaston Emile Soumialot, began in the east and rapidly spread. At first, these "Simbas" numbered only a few hundred men, poorly armed with spears and machetes and clad in rags and animal skins.

Accompanied by their witch doctors, the rebels moved from Albertville (present day Kalemie) on Lake Tanganyika, their numbers soon swelling to thousands as they seized town after town without opposition. The ANC troops usually fled without firing a shot, abandoning their weapons to the Simbas.

On 22 July 1964, the provincial capital of Kindu (where three years previously, 13 Italian airmen assigned to the U.N. forces were abducted, dismembered, and eaten by rebellious ANC troops who sold the bodies in the Kindu market) 250 miles south of Stanleyville fell to the rebels. Despite the airlift of ANC "paracommandos" to bolster the city's defenses, the Simbas captured Stanleyville. Many of the ANC surrendered — only to be tortured and then executed. The Simbas pushed on north and west of Stanleyville, eventually penetrating as far west as Lisala on the Congo River.

Europeans, Please Stay ... For Lunch

A week before this, Soumialot had issued a radio communique to the whites of Stanleyville: "You have nothing to fear from us. Stay here and continue to work. We need you. You will be safer under our government than under the Leopoldville regime. Nothing will happen to you if you remain in Stanleyville." At first, the whites



Belgian para-commando rigs his equipment and parachute, Kamina Airfield. This will be his first jump from a C-130.

were treated well by the Simbas but the situation soon deteriorated as the Simbas suffered setbacks at the hands of Hoare's "Wild Geese" and their Katangese *gendarmes*. In Stanleyville, the Simbas began addressing the whites as *mateka* (Swahili for "butter" ... it also meant "meat").

Americans were especially hated by Simbas. Their leaders blamed all their setbacks on American troops and airplanes. Soumialot issued a warning that any Americans captured were subject to execution and he also could not guarantee the safety of any U.N. officials. The Simbas were holding the Westerners as hostages. When confronted by Red Cross delegates, Gbenye (see sidebar) and Soumialot said they'd never heard of the Red Cross. When told about the Geneva Convention (particularly the ban on holding people as hostages) they said they had not heard about that, either. In any case, they added, they did not consider themselves bound by the Geneva rules which, they scoffed, were "Written by whites." At that time four of Gbenye's children were safely at school. In Geneva.

In a picturesque park behind Stanleyville's post office stood the Patrice Lumumba monument. On the morning of 16 August, while Olenga was in Bukavu, one of his deputies ordered about a dozen Congolese prisoners to the monument. The Simbas then staged executions for the benefit of the gathered mob. Sometimes the victims were riddled with bullets. Other times they were hacked and chopped to bits with spears and machetes. Ritualistic cannibalism — the eating of certain body parts such as the heart or liver to acquire the power or virtues of the victim — was an old custom in this region of the Congo. Sylvere Bondeweke, a Stanleyville politician, was one of those killed at the Lumumba Monument. Bondeweke had to die — but Bondeweke had power. The mob cut his liver from his body while he still breathed.

Pieces were snatched up and devoured. Now they had Bondeweke's power. Over the

next five days about 120 Congolese were slaughtered at this monument almost as some type of bizarre offering to Lumumba.

A Belgian, born in Stanleyville, met an old Congolese man during the Lumumba Monument executions. He was downcast. "What's wrong, *mzee*?" asked the Belgian. "Life is hard, life is hard," lamented the old man. "They killed the mayor at the monument this afternoon and I cut a very nice piece from his back because I wanted some meat. Then I took it home. But when I left it near the fire to get some salt, a dog grabbed it and now I have no meat to eat. I am hungry."

Throughout the Simba occupation, people were thrown off the Tshopo River bridge to the crocodiles below. As many as 2,000 may have died this way. At Kindu, at least 800 were killed, many burned alive, at the Lumumba monument there.

In Paulis, 2-4,000 were slaughtered. Anyone who was an "intellectual" — a member of the old establishment — was singled out.

Pianos, Hearing Aids, Gold Teeth and Paranoia

If not for the viciousness of the rapes, murder, mutilations, and looting the ignorance of the Simbas (especially the *jeunesse*; young Simbas no more than 12- or 13-years old, particularly given to butchery) would have been comical. In one Stanleyville home a group of Simbas came across a grand piano and were certain that it was a radio transmitter. None of them had ever seen a piano before. The Simbas were even worried that the Americans would bring a submarine up the Congo River — past the Stanleyville Falls. One European in Paulis wore a hearing aid which the Simbas believed was a radio transmitter used to call in American bombers. They executed him. A Belgian in Boende often tapped his gold tooth nervously. The Simbas knew he must be sending radio messages. They executed him, as well.

Originally content to butcher their own people, the Simbas began committing atrocities against white residents. Throughout the Simba-held Congo, women, children, and even nuns, were gang-raped before being killed. Something had to be done or the 1,600 white hostages in Stanleyville would suffer a similar fate.

Tshombe asked the United States for help and President Lyndon B. Johnson replied by dispatching Joint Task Force Leo. JTF Leo came about as part of U.S. Strike Command (STRICOM) OPLAN 515 generated during Mulele's rebellion. Several months later, General Paul D. Adams, of STRICOM, dusted off OPLAN 515 and revised it, adding a platoon of airborne infantry. The STRICOM task force of three Tactical Air Command C-130s and a C-130 "Talking Bird" communications aircraft from the 464th Troop Carrier Wing at Pope Air Force Base, N.C., were accompanied by a platoon of 82nd Airborne Division paratroopers. Total strength of JTF Leo numbered about 28 officers and 98 men. Ambassador Godley had requested a battal-

Lumumba

Patrice Lumumba, the first prime minister (June-September 1960) of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was dismissed from office by President Joseph Kasavubu.

Lumumba and his supporters contested the legality of this and set up their own central government. Nine days after Lumumba's dismissal, Colonel Joseph Mobutu seized power temporarily, before reaching an agreement with Kasavubu. In October, the U.N. recognized Kasavubu's claim and in November Lumumba attempted to travel from his U.N. protection in Leopoldville to Stanleyville. He was captured by Kasavubu's forces en route and arrested. On 17 January 1961, he was handed over to Katangese secessionists and murdered.

—R.K.

ion of U.S. troops. He got a platoon.

JTF Leo was sent into the Congo to evacuate whites not being held by the Simbas and OPLAN 519, an assault by paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division, was proposed.

Bête Noire NATO

A message intercepted from Olenga, in Kindu, to Gbenye, in Stanleyville, on 7 October said: "I give you official order. If NATO aircraft bomb and kill Congolese civilian population, please kill one foreigner for each Congolese in your region ... If no bombing, please treat foreigners as honored guests in accordance with Bantu custom. Give them food and drink."

While a flurry of negotiations involving

The Murder of "Major" Carlson

Dr. Paul Carlson, a medical missionary of the Evangelical Covenant Church, had become an international *cause célèbre*. Simba leaders had ranted repeatedly of the thousands of American soldiers which the Simbas were facing. Gbenye declared Carlson "a Major in the American Army" and sentenced him to death following a "war council tribunal." Diplomats from around the world pleaded for the life of the missionary doctor. Carlson was held under a death sentence in the Victoria Residence Hotel and would be in the column of about 250 hostages that was marched towards the airport. Near the Congo Palace Hotel, just two blocks from the Victoria, the column halted and the Simbas opened fire. Carlson fled after the initial fusillade of Simba bullets, only to be cut down as he tried to scale a wall which Charlie Davis, another American, had already cleared. The Para-Commandos arrived a few minutes later — but too late for Dr. Paul Carlson.

—R.K.

American, Belgian, and African diplomats ensued, various military solutions were investigated. Both Belgium and the United States began planning for military intervention. Special Forces A-Teams were headed for a possible rescue mission — Operation Golden Hawk, a HALO parachute jump below Stanleyville to infiltrate upriver by rubber boat; Operation Flag Pole, a plan to rescue the consulate staff in Stanleyville with an ad-hoc force of Marine embassy guards and former military types in Leopoldville, was called off — according to one American embassy official, “It was a half-assed operation anyways.”

As the situation in the Congo worsened, William Brubeck, a representative of the Congo Working Group met Etienne Davignon, the *Chef de Cabinet* for Belgian Foreign Minister Paul Henri Spaak, at a reception on 8 November and was told, “If you get us the aircraft we can do it with a battalion.”

It sounded like a good idea.

While there is no record of Spaak’s offer or of the meeting at President Lyndon Johnson’s ranch where Secretary Rusk and National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy presented Spaak’s offer to President Johnson. Lieutenant General David Burchinal, Director of the Joint Staff, called the U.S. European Command Headquarters (USEUCOM), in Paris, the very next day (Armistice Day evening in Paris), ordering three planners to Brussels.

Pearl-Handled Pistols

Brigadier General Russell Dougherty, USEUCOM Deputy Operations Officer, was called away from the annual Marine Corps Ball to leave for Brussels. He was joined there by Lieutenant Colonel J.L. Gray (USAF Headquarters, Europe) and an airborne operations expert, Captain B.F. Brashears. With them was Colonel J. E. Dunn, carrying verbal instructions from the Joint Chiefs of Staff: “Keep it small; don’t let it turn into a John Wayne operation; no pearl-handled pistols or wagons so loaded the mules can’t pull them.”

The planners worked throughout the 12th and 13th of November. The plan, USEUCOM OPLAN 319/64 (Dragon



Belgian para-commandos rig their parachutes prior to the jump on Stanleyville.

Rouge) was a mere 22 pages long. Dragon Rouge would be a three-phased operation with 12 U.S. C-130E aircraft flying into Kleine Brogel, Belgium, to load 545 paratroopers of the *Regiment du Para-Commando*, eight armored jeeps, and 12 AS-24 motor-tricycles and then fly 4,134 nautical miles to Ascension Island, stopping to refuel en route at Moron de la Frontera, Spain. Phase II was a 2,405 mile flight to their staging area at Kamina Air Base in Katanga. Phase III would be the 550-mile flight to Stanleyville (escorted by B-26s flown by CIA-hired Cuban-exile pilots) culminating in the parachute assault.

The parachute assault was also broken down into three phases:

1) Five U.S. C-130s would drop 320 Belgian paratroopers from the Para-Commando Regiment (the 1st Battalion and Regimental Headquarters) onto the golf course just northeast of the Stanleyville airport.

2) Then, following the assault force by a half-hour, two more C-130s loaded with the armored jeeps would land at Stanleyville’s airport.

3) Thirty minutes later the remaining five C-130s carrying supplies and one company of paratroopers from the 2nd Battalion would land or drop their men and supplies as needed. It was a simple plan. No John Wayne. No pearl-handed pistols.

On 15 November, Brigadier General Robert D. Forman, commander of the U.S. Air Force’s 322nd Air Division, was ordered to prepare to airlift a Belgian force to the Congo. Colonel Burgess Gradwell, commander of Detachment One of the 322nd at Evreux, France, would have over-

all command of the Dragon Rouge airlift. The aircraft were assembled at Evreux Fauville Air Force Base, France, and at 1740 Greenwich Mean Time (Z) on 17 November the 14 C-130s departed for Kleine Brogel, Belgium.

Red Dragon Rescue

Flying in the first aircraft were Colonel Gradwell; Captain Donald R. Strobaugh, the 5th Aerial Port Squadron (APORON) combat control team commander; and Sergeant Robert J. Dias, a 5th APORON radio specialist. When they reached Kleine Brogel, the Belgian paratroopers were loaded. Their commander, Colonel Charles Laurent, 51, had led the paratroopers who seized Leopoldville’s airport in 1960 from rebellious ANC troops and had jumped into Stanleyville Airport in 1950 on a training exercise. Laurent’s sergeant major had also jumped into Stanleyville. While the sergeant major had over 3,000 jumps and Laurent over 300, this was not true of the young troopers in Laurent’s regiment. Most were 18- to 20-year-old conscripts. The paratroopers of the 1st Battalion had the most time in service: 10 months.

At least they were better off than the 3rd Battalion whose conscripts had just completed their second month of service. The 2nd Battalion conscripts had just 5-1/2 months in the army. Laurent’s force would consist of the 1st Battalion, a company from the 2nd Battalion, and a detachment from the 3rd Battalion. The 1st Battalion had been formed in England during WWII as part of the Special Air Service (SAS), fighting at Normandy, the Ardennes, and in Holland, Germany, and Denmark. The battalion retained the SAS motto “Who Dares Wins,” the Pegasus emblem of the British Airborne, and the red beret. They also gave their jump commands in English.

Next month, jump with the Belgian paras and share their stunning triumphs — and tragic failures — in ending the Simba’s butchery of Africans, Europeans and Americans in the former Belgian Congo.

Rob Krott is an SOF senior foreign correspondent. ✉

Christophe Gbenye, Lumumba’s Minister of Interior, founded the *Conseil National de Liberation* — National Liberation Council (CNL). He joined the Simbas in Stanleyville, 4 September 1964. The day after his arrival he was proclaimed President and Premier of the *Republique Populaire du Congo*. It was said of Gbenye: “They made him president because the people felt if they couldn’t

during Gizenga’s secession, before fleeing to Brazzaville where he was Secretary General of Revolutionary Forces in Christophe Gbenye’s CNL. He was sent to Burundi by the CNL to organize a rebellion. There he recruited thousands of supporters in eastern Kivu. After the Simbas were defeated he avoided capture and fled the Congo for exile in Cairo.

Nicholas Olenga, a Batetela, had no military experience but appeared in Stanleyville in the uniform of a Belgian lieutenant general and carrying a dress sword. Olenga had been a messenger and laborer for the Kindu railroad office before being appointed provincial Director of Public Works under Gizenga’s secessionist government in Stanleyville, in 1961. Olenga avoided capture and fled to the Sudan.

Pierre Mulele, Lumumba’s Minister of Education and Gizenga’s Ambassador to Egypt, had been trained in guerrilla warfare in China. The Kwilu uprising officially ended in December 1965 and Mulele went into exile in Brazzaville. He later returned to the Congo under amnesty, in 1968, but was executed anyway.

— R.K.

Leaders Of The “Simba” Revolt

have someone that everybody trusted they’d settle for someone whom everybody distrusted.” Gbenye actually complained that, “No Catholic priest, black or white, has volunteered to be the chaplain of the Simbas. It’s a shame! I’m a Catholic and it makes me very sad.” Gbenye fled the Congo for exile in Cairo.

Emile Soumialot, a former warehouse clerk, was the Simba’s Minister of Defense. He had been a district commissioner in Kindu under Patrice Lumumba and Minister of Justice in Kivu Province

Kalashnikov's Kombat Klassic

**SOF Celebrates
The 50th Anniversary
Of The AK47**



Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



General Mikhail T. Kalashnikov, whose AK rifle is in service with the armed forces of 55 nations. More than 70 million Kalashnikov-type small arms have been manufactured. (right) This would have been an impossible occurrence during Russia's 50 years of communism. But, in November 1997, the Russian Orthodox Archbishop of the Udmurt Republic honored the 50th anniversary of the AK47 rifle on the steps of Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in the presence of Vladimir P. Grodetsky, Director General of IZHMAH and Mikhail T. Kalashnikov.

It has been conservatively estimated that more than 70 million Kalashnikov-type small arms have been manufactured to date throughout the world. The AK47 rifle and its many variants are the most ubiquitous infantry weapons ever fielded. Nothing else even comes close to their dominance on the battlefield during the second half of the 20th century. Today it is still used by the armed forces of 55 nations. Six countries carry its image on their national seals.

Russian AK rifles are principally manufactured in the formerly closed city of Izhevsk at the IZHMAH factory (Dept. SOF, 3 Derjabin Str., 426006 Izhevsk, Russia; phone: 011-7-3412-240702; fax: 011-7-3412-781055). At the beginning of the Great Patriotic War (World War II), the Izhevsk plant was the only one in the Soviet Union producing rifles. By December 1941, a daily output of 10,000 Mosin Nagant rifles was achieved. No other factory in the world has ever approached this level of production. Located 1,130 kilometers due east of Moscow in the Udmurt Republic, Izhevsk has a

Text continued on page 43





(left) Russian arms designer Gennadiy Nikolayevich Nikonov, of IZHMAASH, holding one of the many prototypes of his AN-94 "Abakan" assault rifle.



(right) Designer Mikhail E. Dragunov, close personal friend of the author and eldest son of Evgeni F. Dragunov, holding a specimen of the KLIN/KEDR submachine gun family which was designed by his late father but brought to production-series development by him.

(right) A .410-gauge semiautomatic shotgun of the SAIGA family. Based upon the Kalashnikov method of operation and sharing some parts interchangeability with the AK, this particular version has been configured as an AK and is already in service with border-guard units of several states of the CIS. (below) Victor Kalashnikov, son of Mikhail T. Kalashnikov who, together with Alexi Dragunov, youngest son of Evgeni F. Dragunov, designed the Bizon submachine gun with its unique helical-type magazine, shown here with a sound-suppressed version of his design.



(above) *SOF's* Contributing Editor, Valery N. Shilin, fires the AK105 which is chambered for the 5.45x39mm round, has a 12.4-inch barrel with an effective muzzle device and a side-folding buttstock.



A 12-gauge version of the SAIGA semiautomatic shotgun, which is based upon the AK assault rifle.



(top) First photo published in the West of a new caliber 9mm Parabellum pistol that is double-action, but can be carried "locked-and-cocked." It was developed by the Izhevsk Mechanical Plant for Russian army trials. (above) Double-barrel derringer developed at the Izhevsk Mechanical Plant and chambered for the caliber .380 ACP (9mm Kurz) cartridge.



SOF's Technical Editor, Peter G. Kokalis, and Mikhail T. Kalashnikov toast in the Russian manner; Kalashnikov with vodka (of course) and Kokalis with coke (alas).



population of 730,000. Its small-arms factory was established in 1807, making it the third such facility established in Russia.

During the first week of November 1997, Ishmash celebrated the 50th anniversary of the AK47. *Soldier Of Fortune* was the only U.S. publication invited to participate in this historic event. The week's events included two formal celebrations held in the city's principal theaters and a banquet honoring the AK47's designer, Mikhail Kalashnikov, an arms fair and several small dinner parties attended only by General Kalashnikov, his immediate family and a handful of his personal friends from the United States, Japan and Germany. What follows is a photographic odyssey of some of the events and people I saw during that memorable occasion.

I would never have believed for a moment when we were in Afghanistan in 1983 that someday the world would so change that I would sit down to dinner with a Hero of the Soviet Union who designed the rifle that symbolized everything I was fighting against with all the passion and energy within me. How incredible. On the 18-hour train ride from Moscow to Izhevsk I had ample opportunity to gaze out the window at the snow-covered immenseness that is Russia and contemplate this strange turn of events. ✕



Designer Anton Levin fires a unique 12-gauge slide-action shotgun developed by the Izhevsk Mechanical Plant that features both a detachable box magazine and the standard tubular magazine. (below) SOF's Contributing Editor, Valery N. Shilin, fires a sound-suppressed version of the Bizon submachine gun. Note propellant gases escaping from the front of the sound suppressor, a common phenomenon.



(left) A member of OMON (Police Special Assignment Group), an elite Russian law-enforcement unit, here assigned to handle crowd control during the 50th anniversary ceremonies for the AK47 rifle in Izhevsk.



Gateway To

HELL

Charging 8th Marines Take On Saddam

The inky black of the Kuwaiti night erupted as the TOW missile in front of me streaked from its launcher atop a Hummer, the supremely deadly device racing unseen by enemy eyes through the darkness and impaling the Iraqi T-62 MBT (main battle tank) that was firing at the lead elements of the charging 8th Marines.

In a sudden flash of fire, twisted

**Text & Photos by
Bob Newman**

steel and assorted body parts, the turret popped off the hull of the doomed tank and flew end over end straight up 30 feet, then crashed back down onto the furiously burning tank's mangled carcass.

I viewed all this through the otherworldly glow of my night-vision goggles from the hatch of my "trac," an LVTP-7 amphibious assault vehicle belonging to Company B, 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion (aggressive reservists who had been assigned to the 8th Marines for the Gulf War). We were minutes into the assault through the lanes that had been blasted through the berm by combat engineers; that high wall of sand that separated the Coalition Forces in northern Saudi Arabia from those of Iraq in occupied Kuwait. Our assault force had raced through the berm and our lead units had immediately come under fire from enemy heavy machine guns, mortars, and

(above) An Iraqi T-62 MBT lies in ruin, the victim of an 8th Marines TOW missile during Operation Desert Storm. In a sudden flash of fire, twisted steel and assorted body parts, the turret popped off the hull of the doomed tank and flew end over end straight up 30 feet, then crashed back down onto the furiously burning tank's mangled carcass. The battle began when a United States Marines' assault force had raced through a berm and was met by heavy enemy machine-gun fire, mortars and artillery. (left) As countless oil wells burned in the Umm Gudair oil field, the radio erupted in urgency with a blanket order from 2nd Marine Division headquarters. "MOPP 4! MOPP 4! All units go to MOPP 4 at this time. Chemical attack in Lane Red One."

artillery, the sounds of the battle quickly drowning out the blaring music from huge loudspeakers on the berm that were aimed toward the enemy, each sending forth a rousing rendition of the *Marines' Hymn*, a classic psychological operation that put a smile on every Leatherneck's face.

Like huge clattering dragonflies, Marine AH-1 Super Cobra gunships whirled and darted overhead, their own TOW missiles, rockets, and tri-barreled machine guns laying horrific waste to the hapless Iraqi forces that fell under the gaze of the Marines operating the weapons systems in the bows of the menacing birds of prey.

As the distant desert sun began to peek over the horizon, adding light to the towering flames from countless oil wells burning in the

Umm Gudair oil field to my right, the radio erupted in urgency with a blanket order from 2nd Marine Division headquarters.

"MOPP 4! MOPP 4! All units go to MOPP 4 at this time. Chemical attack in Lane Red One; I say again, chemical attack in Lane Red One. Two Marines wounded by chemical mine. MOPP 4, over."

I scurried down out of the hatch and shouted over the roar of the Amtrac's engine for my men to go to MOPP 4, the highest level of NBC readiness. Curses and promises of payback were uttered as chemical protective masks, gloves, booties, and full-exposure suits were hastily donned. Sergeant Joe Negrón, my mortar section leader and a former "Latin Kings" gang member from Chicago (the latter being a qualifier as far as I was concerned), quickly checked the men's gear to ensure all was well. I returned to my hatch to see what I could see.

Somewhere off to my right flank, I knew the 6th Marines were wondering just how intense the fight would become in their sector, and which one of their tracs had just popped the gas mine. I touched the grenades attached to my assault vest and fingered my K-Bar fighting knife, then looked to my front fully expecting to see clouds of mustard gas and sarin nerve agent drifting our way, but instead saw the gray blur of a Marine

F-18 Hornet pulling up from a bombing run, its CBUs (cluster bomb units) falling away from the fuselage as the jet screamed its egress. The ground shook as the bomblets detonated in what seemed like a million tiny explosions, smoke rising from the desert floor.

Yes! I yelled in my mind. I looked up to find the jet, but it had vanished into the low clouds, leaving only its throaty voice and the bodies of the enemy to mark its visit. I wondered if the pilot had been a student of mine at the infamous Navy SERE (Survival-Evasion-Resistance-Escape) School in Maine, where I had just finished an instructor tour less than five months earlier. In any case, he had done his job, a task that made ours a bit easier.

The Burning Desert

The 8th Marines (commanded by Colonel Larry S. Schmidt), one of three infantry regiments out of Camp Lejeune, began arriving in theater in the fall of 1990 and was completely in place in Camp 15 at Al Jubayl by early January 1991. Consisting of three grunt battalions (1st Battalion, 8th Marines commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Bruce A. Gombar; 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Kevin A. Conry; and 3rd Battalion, 23rd Marines commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Ray C. Dawson) and supported by Companies B and C, 4th Tank Battalion; Company C, 2nd Combat Engineer



Marine AH-1 Super Cobra gunships whirled and darted overhead, their own TOW missiles, rockets, and tri-barreled machine guns laying horrific waste to the hapless Iraqi forces that fell under the gaze of the Marines operating the weapons systems in the bows of the menacing birds of prey. Cobra gunships were directly responsible for hundreds of destroyed Iraqi tanks and APCs. (left) The 8th Marines headed for the burning desert to the north, the growls of the tracs, tanks, light-armed vehicles (pictured) and TOW-equipped Hummers reverberating across the cold sand as if to tell the enemy that they were about to be pounded upon and eaten by some mythical beast from the past. Marine light-armed vehicles (as pictured) were responsible for flank security and reconnaissance.



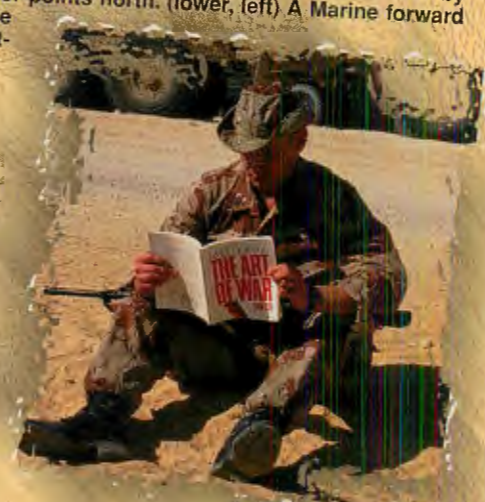
(left) Curses and promises of payback were uttered as chemical protective masks, gloves, booties, and full exposure suits were hastily donned. The threat to chemical attack was taken very seriously, but only two Marines were directly hit by chemical agents during the war. (above) A Marine F-18 Hornet breaks away from an aerial refueler. The Hornet was appreciated for its effectiveness against all manner of enemy units. (right) Sorry, Saddam, but "shit happens." Such was the spray-painted message left by a Marine on this Iraqi truck in an area known as the United Agricultural Research Facility (UARF), or the Kuwaiti National Forest. (below, right) A Sun Tzu — at Camp 15 before leaving for points north — *The Art of War* by observer gives his good friend — the barrel of a 155mm M198 — a hug shortly after the war ended.



Battalion; Company D, 2nd Assault Amphibian Battalion; and Company B, 4th Assault Amphibian

Gudair, ghastly torches that seemed to light the way to hell itself. As Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, hustled out of their Amtrak's and began to dig in — we were well within Iraqi artillery range and didn't want to unnecessarily expose ourselves to their South African-made G-5 howitzers — it didn't take long to realize that we had a little problem, namely a layer of gypsum less than a foot beneath the desert floor. E-tools sent sparks flying as they impacted the solid rock, and each Marine suddenly realized there was no way for him to dig in.

Looking at the white layer of rock, I knew that if the enemy decided to open up with their artillery that we would be in serious



Battalion, the legendary regiment was assigned to play a pivotal role in the 2nd Marine Division's bold attack directly into the heart of the Iraqi defenses; no trickery or clever maneuvers this time, just a brazen assault right where the Iraqis would expect it least — right up the middle and into the heart of the mortified enemy, a classic Marine ploy that had worked for more than 200 years and was expected to work this time, too.

Our confidence came with the realization that few enemies could resist a Marine armored assault, especially after the enemy had forced the Marines to live in a cold, wet desert for several weeks. We knew attitude mattered — a fact lost upon Iraqis.

On about G minus 2, elements of the 8th Marines made what would be their final night movement to a position just short of the berm, close enough to see the hundreds of burning oil wells of Umm

shit, but there was little we could do other than hope we went into the attack soon. I was about to get my wish. Two nights later, the 8th Marines mounted their Amtracs and headed for the burning desert to the north, the growls of the tracs, tanks, light-armored vehicles, and TOW-equipped Hummers reverberating across the cold sand as if to tell the enemy that they were about to be pounded upon and eaten by some mythical beast from the past. And, in a way, they were, for many interrogations to come in the next few days would reveal Iraqi soldiers who were terrified at the thought of facing the cannibalistic, murderous Marines of legend. The cowardly soldiers had been told by their superiors of the many heinous acts Marines were required to perform in battle and just to get into the Corps, such as eating enemy dead, executing all prisoners at dawn, and even being required to kill a family member in order to be accepted for recruitment. (Potential future Marine officers, Iraqi soldiers thought, were required to kill their mothers, whereas enlisted men had only to kill a family member of choice.)

Gateway To Hell

We knew it was just about time to go when late in the afternoon of G minus 1, Marine 155mm howitzers opened up on Iraqi positions with rocket-assisted projectiles (RAP) that we prayed would find their targets. Final preparations were made, weapons and gear checked and rechecked.

As the regiment began speeding toward their lanes in the berm, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines (1/8) was forced to temporarily slow its attack as some of the engineer vehicles struck mines and line charges fouled in overhead power lines. Demo team members Corporal George Morgan and Lance Corporal Gerald Randolph ran forward through enemy fire, placed charges on the unexploded line charges, and ran back to safety just as the charges blew.

Third Platoon, Alpha Company, 1/8, was assigned the mission of securing a building surrounded by chain-link fence several hundred meters to the east. At a range of about 300 meters, the platoon came under attack by Iraqis firing repeated volleys of RPGs. Not swayed, the Marines charged while being covered by their Amtracs' .50s. Still the Iraqis wouldn't quit, and at 100 meters the platoon was pinned down by machine-gun fire. Third squad, under the command of Sergeant Bill Warren, rushed the building while being covered by the remaining two squads. As the war cries of the crazed devil dogs flooded the building, the Iraqis finally came to the stark realization they were about to be slain in a graphic manner. They fled out across the desert.

Fatal Mistake

As the 8th Marines prepared to continue their assault toward Kuwait City, a battalion-sized mechanized infantry unit with armor support attempted to penetrate the regiment's rear area but ran straight into a ready 1/8. The Marine battalion stopped the Iraqis cold from attacking the regiment's logistics' trains, with the battle beginning at 0620 on G plus 1. Calling in close-air support and tanks, and with the bold assistance of Sergeant Scott Dotson's TOW section, which sped forward to intercept the Iraqi armor, 1/8 quickly destroyed 39 APCs and tanks, with Dotson's section accounting for eight tanks that were left as smoldering hulks.

One of the regiment's objectives was an area known as the "ice cube," which was at one time a migrant workers' camp, now occupied by Iraqis. Part of the ice cube was an area called the "ice tray," a complex of buildings surrounded by a high chain-link fence that had been reported to be, among other things, an anti-aircraft site. Shortly after sunset, 2/4's Fox Company attacked the complex while illuminating the area with the company's 60mm mortars and M203

grenade launchers. The lead trac crashed through the fence and immediately ferreted out three dozen Iraqis from an underground bunker. Smaller buildings surrounding the main building yielded hundreds of SA-7 Grail anti-aircraft missiles. Under interrogation, a prisoner said a T-72 main battle tank had just departed, along with a ZSU-23-4 self-propelled anti-aircraft gun, one of the most deadly such weapons on the battlefield.

Strike Two

Lt. Col. Gombar's 1/8 and Lt. Col. Conry's 2/4, upon setting into the defense after seizing their part of the ice cube, were the recipients of a counterattack at 0230 on G plus 2. The Iraqis, in one of their boldest moves, used a two-pronged attack of APCs and dismounted infantry to hit the road junction that was the boundary between the two Marine battalions. Iraqi artillery came in, wounded five Marines, and a tremendous battle ensued that shook the desert floor. Iraqi APCs exploded in balls of orange flames, sometimes within 75 yards of 1/8's perimeter, as TOW missiles and tank rounds massacred the enemy armor; heavy machine-gun fire raked the Iraqi grunts and caused the counterattack to fail.

Captain Mark Ettore, 1/8's fire-support coordinator, suspecting that the enemy might be falling back in order to regroup for a second counterattack, called for three targets to be hit again by 10th Marines' arty. In the pitch black the 155mm HE rounds fell directly onto the Iraqis as they prepared to fall back to alternate positions. Many died.

Coup de grâce

The next day, the 8th Marines quickly went back on the attack, heading for the area of the United Agricultural Research Facility (UARF), also known as the Kuwaiti National Forest, in the Kuwait City suburb of Al Jahrah, a huge area of tall pine trees, greenhouses, fields, vineyards, and support buildings that was occupied by a brigade belonging to the Iraqi 3rd Armored Division. As 2/4 approached at dusk, enemy fire steadily increased and trenches had to be cleared by dismounted infantry. Enemy snipers opened up and Marines moved quickly forward to take them out.

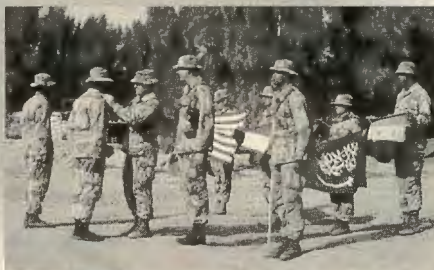
Once inside the UARF, Marines quickly realized the area was infested with bunkers and fighting positions. One Marine found a plate of food in one bunker that was still warm. As 3/23 moved to the northeast near 1/8 and 2/4, the reserve battalion came under fire from a dairy farm; RPGs and sniper fire caused the Marines to instantly retaliate by hitting the enemy's ammunition truck, killing those in and around it. This author found the dairy farmer the next day, his farm having been captured by Iraqis on 2 August 1991, the day Iraq invaded Kuwait. As I spoke with the man, a Kuwaiti resistance fighter whom he knew joined us fresh from the fighting downtown. The guerrilla's cover had been his job as a milk-truck driver, which allowed him to move about freely. The following day, Iraq surrendered unconditionally.

The 8th Marines remained in Kuwait well into spring, with 2/4 finally returning home in mid-May. The regiment's future would hold action for them in Africa and elsewhere during the coming few years. If history is any indication, the storied regiment will see much more combat in the centuries to come.

Bob Newman, SOF's contributing editor for Gulf War veterans' affairs, is a retired Marine gunnery sergeant, and the author of many books including Marine Special Warfare & Elite Unit Tactics and Guerrillas In The Mist. ✕

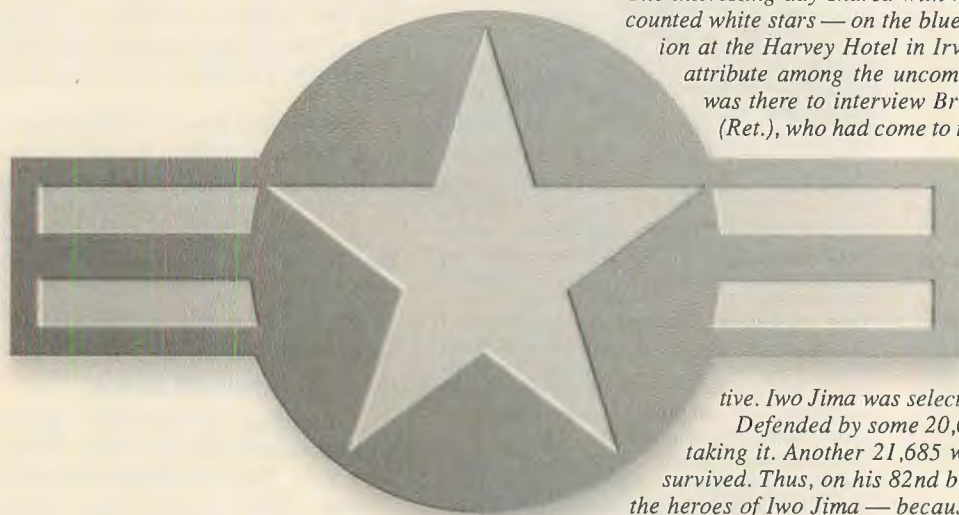


(above) Grunts from the 8th Marines use a sand table to plot strategy. That's about all the sand was good for. In one area, Marines encountered a layer of gypsum less than a foot beneath the desert floor, making it impossible for them to dig in for shelter from the enemy's South African-made G-5 howitzers. (below) Marines of Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, are promoted by Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Conry and his battalion sergeant major, Melvin D. "Mad Dog" Turner, a Vietnam veteran who would later see additional action in Somalia.



Renaissance Man

OF MODERN AVIATION



The interesting day shared with heroes and living history started as I counted white stars — on the blue neck ribbon of my elevator companion at the Harvey Hotel in Irving, Texas. But valor is the common attribute among the uncommon group of Iwo Jima survivors. I was there to interview Brigadier General Paul Tibbets, USAF (Ret.), who had come to thank them at their reunion, on behalf of the 20th Air Force.

Tibbets, piloting the Enola Gay, had delivered the first of the one-two atomic punches that brought the fanatical Empire of Japan to its knees. But before Tibbets and his 509th Composite Group could even close on Japan, an emergency landing field was imperative. Iwo Jima was selected, and a terrible price was paid.

Defended by some 20,000 Japanese, 6,821 Americans died taking it. Another 21,685 were wounded. Only 1,083 Japanese survived. Thus, on his 82nd birthday, Paul Tibbets came to praise the heroes of Iwo Jima — because by the end of the war, Iwo's landing strips had saved 2,400 crippled planes and 27,000 crew with unscheduled landings.

SOF Interviews

Brigadier General Paul Tibbets

Text & Photos by
Richard Rongstad

SOF: *What inspired your interest in mechanical things and, in particular, your interest in airplanes? Also, what was your early flying experience?*

Gen. Tibbets: My first airplane ride was when I was twelve years old. Doug Davis, a barnstorming pilot working for the Curtiss Candy Company, gave me my first ride in a Waco 9. My job was to throw candy bars out the airplane that had parachutes attached to them. Paper parachutes. My father was distributor for Curtiss Candies in Florida.

SOF: *Where did you receive your early pilot training, who were your instructors and what aircraft did you qualify in?*

Gen. Tibbets: ... the guy that soloed me, Rusty Heard, was flying in the Marine Reserve outfit at Opa-locka. He was a sergeant mechanic, but he was a good pilot. I [later] gave him his first ride in a B-17 ... And then when I got out [retired] I was going after a type rating in a Lear Jet, I added up my flying time. I had over 9,000 hours of flying time of which only about 135 were as copilot ...

SOF: *What is your favorite aircraft?*

Gen. Tibbets: [For] my favorite aircraft, you'd have to give me the circumstances. I

like the old C-54. I had more weather-flying experience in the C-54 than anything. I flew one in the North Atlantic for about four months waiting for the B-29 to get ready to be tested ... But, for pure joy of flying — the B-47s. I loved to get that thing up and dance with the clouds. It was so graceful.

SOF: *We've been told that you were the lead pilot in the first daylight B-17 raids over Germany ... Did you lead the first daylight raids?*

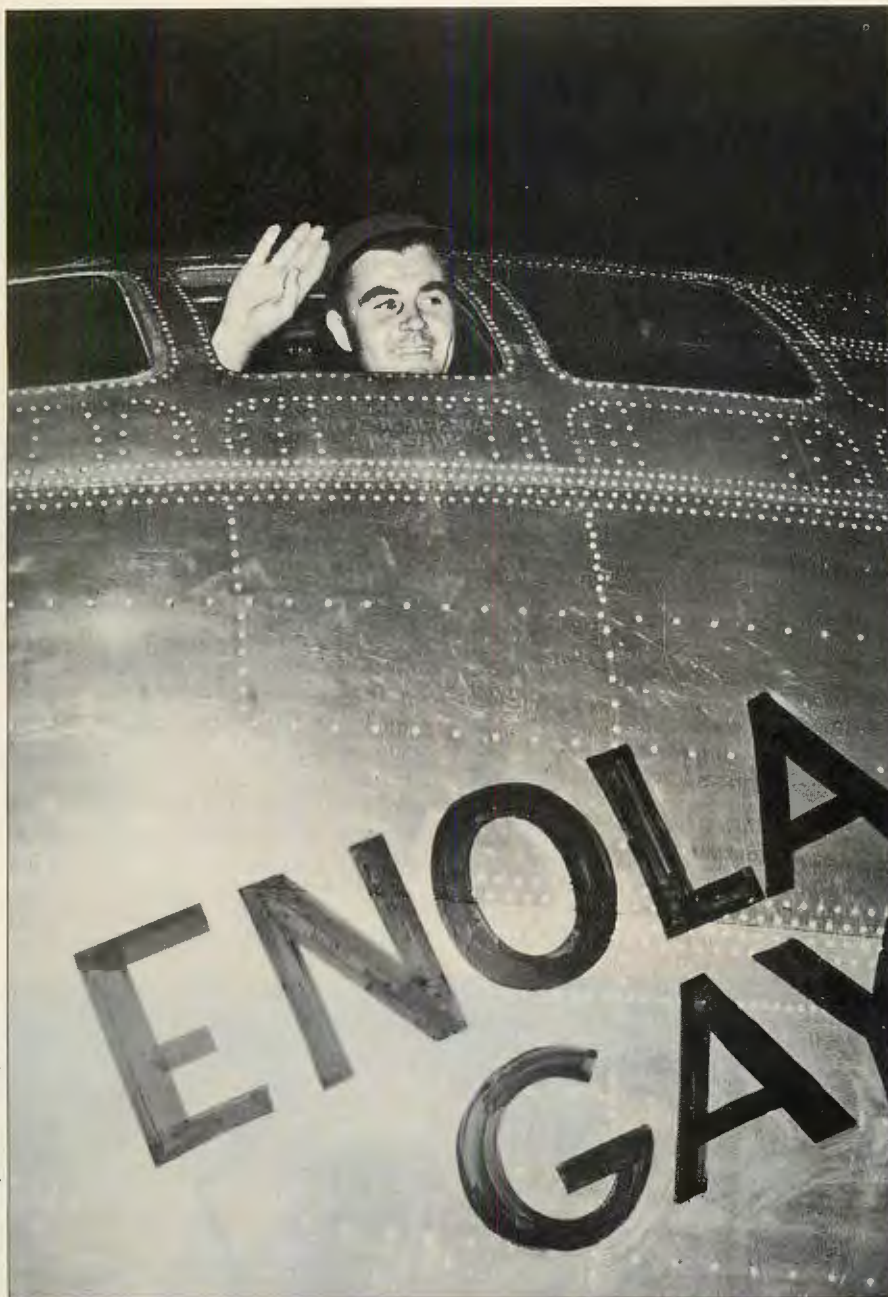
Gen. Tibbets: I did. That was on the 17th of August, '42. [Tibbets piloted the lead plane, a B-17 named *Red Gremlin*].

SOF: *Were the British cooperative with you in planning your missions?*

Gen. Tibbets: Well, they were. Because they were forced to be. We went over there in June. We didn't fly until August, because the British were trying to get a fool from the political side to divide us up and to fill the ranks of the RAF [Royal Air Force]. That's what they wanted. Spaatz [Commanding General 8th Air Force Carl Spaatz] and our people back here [stateside] said, hell no ...

SOF: *After that were they fairly cooperative in planning missions?*

Gen. Tibbets: Yes. I'll tell you what.



Colonel Paul Tibbets waves from the cockpit of the *Enola Gay* before taking off in pre-dawn darkness from Tinian on a flight into the history books. (below) Photographed on their return from the historic bombing mission on Hiroshima were bombardier Thomas W. Ferebee, left, Paul Tibbets, center, and navigator Theodore J. Van Kirk.

The Englishman as an individual, a lot of them are very nice. I like 'em. Collectively, they're a bunch of bastards (laughter). I was in 340th Bombardment Squadron, 97th Bomb Group.

SOF: How did the B-17 compare to other aircraft you've flown, including the B-29?

Gen. Tibbets: The B-17, I guess you could say, was probably the newest airplane I ever flew. It was four engines. To me, they never had enough engines on airplanes. I loved 'em. The more engines the better. I did fly a B-36, too.

SOF: ... Tell about shooting skeet with General George S. Patton.

Gen. Tibbets: That was at Fort Benning ... before the war. Yeah. George Patton was a Lieutenant Colonel. The skeet range, the officers' club skeet range, was run by a Lt.

Col. Turley, who was a Coast Artilleryman, and Paul Tibbets, second lieutenant, was assistant range officer to Turley, and Paul Tibbets was ordered to be at the skeet range every Sunday morning at eight o'clock to shoot with Patton [and friends] ... we would shoot skeet for twenty-five cents a round [25 targets]. Winner take all. God, you ought to have heard George Patton squeal when he lost!

SOF: What attracted you to skeet shooting?

Gen. Tibbets: I was attracted to shooting because I love to see a target break! (laughter) I still do today!

SOF: There is a photograph of you with two women pilots and a CAA inspector in the book, *Wasps*. Please recall for readers your memories of the women pilots. You trained WASP pilots to fly the B-29. Did you have other experiences with women flyers?

Gen. Tibbets: In late '43, I stopped at a Colorado base to get fuel for my B-25. I saw a B-26 come in. I had heard the B-26 was a flying prostitute, "one a day in Tampa Bay," it was a scary type of thing. We were separated by 75 feet. I couldn't see the pilot. All of a sudden I saw movement, a little black head. I said, 'My God! That's a shorty in that airplane.' Pretty quick I see trim legs in a blue suit coming down out of the hatch, and I look, and I said, 'Oh-oh!' I thought maybe it was a girl, and sure enough, when she moved out from underneath the airplane and straightened up, there she was, a curly headed little girl. The line chief came over. I looked at him and I said, 'What's that?' He said, 'That's a WASP pilot. A Women's Air Service Pilot.' I said, 'Oh, my God!' I didn't know anything about that! It impressed me.

Over a year later I was confronted by a man from General Arnold's office with the fact that they were having trouble at Clovis, New Mexico, trying to get college football heroes to fly the B-29. They said it was unsafe — if you lost an engine you were dead. By that time I had about 1,000 hours in that thing and I just couldn't agree with that. Having gained somewhat of a reputation as a troubleshooter, they asked, 'Can you do anything about it?' [finding flyers for the B-29]. I said, 'Yeah, I can ...'





AP/Wide World

With military brass in Guam on 7 August 1945, Col. Tibbets describes flight experience to press conference. Left to right at table are Brig. Gen. Thomas F. Farrell, Rear Adm. William R. Purnell, Gen. Carl Spaatz, Tibbets, and Maj. Gen. Curtis LeMay, then chief of staff, 20th Air Force.

I said, 'Train two women to fly it.' I thought of my experience with seeing that killer airplane out there with a little girl flying it. It [B-29] can't be that bad an airplane. So, how do we do this? I got permission right away to train two girls to fly the airplane. I was stationed at Eglin Field. It had a WASP detachment ... I knew General Gardner and I told him that I had gotten this directive. He said, "I know about it, I got a call from Washington."

I said I'd like to go talk to the girls down at the nurses' quarters and see if I can find a couple of candidates ... First of all I asked them, 'Anybody got two-engine experience?' And two women held up their hands. One of them was Dora Dougherty. The other was DeDe Moorman ... And they were good friends ... Everything wound up real fast ...

SOF: Were you involved with any of the Cold War buildup of U.S. and NATO forces?

Gen. Tibbets: Yeah. During my tour at the Pentagon, from '62 to '64, I was in charge of what they call the National Military Command Center in the basement. I was there when Kennedy got assassinated. If you don't know about confusion, nobody knew what to do, that was it ... I was there because I was the number one guy in the place. The other guys wanted to go eat. So I stayed while they went to eat lunch ... I'm sitting there and we're connected to the White House ... I've got worldwide communications ... down in the basement five levels below the street.

My phone rang: 'This is the White House. Just wanted to tell you the president's just been assassinated down in Dallas, Texas, today, just a few minutes ago and we'll keep you posted on what's going on. That's all we can tell you now.' Well, about that time, the television started talking. The problem confronting me ... I'm supposed to be the head of the Crisis Center. What do I do? Well, seemed only one thing logical for me to do was to go upstairs and tell General Maxwell D.

Taylor, who was Chief of Staff, that the president's been shot.

Taylor [who had been napping] came out, half his shirttail out of his trousers, necktie loose, and so forth, and he said, 'What can I do for you?' I said to him, 'General, I want to inform you that I've been notified by the White House that President Kennedy's been assassinated in Dallas, Texas about 10 minutes ago.' He said, 'What do you want me to do?' I said,

'Sir, let's put it this way. I would suggest you tell me to call the Joint Chiefs and have them meet you down in the Command Center.' He said, 'That's a good idea. You do that.'

They came. By this time the televisions are just going crazy because it's about 30 minutes-time elapsed. The chiefs were all talking 'What do we do this, what do we do that?' Maxwell Taylor hadn't gotten there yet. And so, Johnson [General] said, 'Wait a minute, gentlemen. Wait a minute. Tibbets is in charge of this place. Ask him what to do.' I said, 'General, if you're asking me what to do, I would call the unified commanders, specified commanders worldwide, and tell them that the man has been assassinated ... to be on an intelligence vigil. Don't go on to any Stage One, Two, Three, [just] intelligence vigil. Look around. Get people looking, listening. See if this is a world plot,' and Johnson said, 'You got it.'

About that time Taylor walked in and I said that I had just called at his direction, the unified and specified commanders and advised them to keep their eyes open and so forth. General Taylor said something [to the staff] and by that time they were sitting down and it was quiet. Stuff was coming in ... they stayed about an hour. And they left. Then the job actually become that of the Joint Staff ...

SOF: Anything else you'd like to add for NATO and the Cold War period?

Gen. Tibbets: I was there at the same



Courtesy Special Collections, Texas Woman's University



(above) Oft selected for his ability as a can-do trouble shooter, Lt. Col. Paul Tibbets trained Copilot Dorothea "DeDe" (Moorman) Johnson, left, and Pilot Dora (Dougherty) Strother to fly B-29 as lesson to "football heroes" afraid to fly new bomber. At right is CAA Inspector Dean Hudson after check flight. Other WASPs of WWII hauled freight, ferried combat aircraft to AO: Of 25,000 applicants, 1,830 were accepted for training — impressive 1,074 won wings. (left) Two Survivors arranged for surprise reunion of Strother and Tibbets in Fort Worth.

time period as the Cuban Missile Crisis, and I listened to McNamara and Kennedy talking back and forth ... Kennedy wanted to blast 'em off of the Cuban map. McNamara kept saying 'We can't do that. We can't do that. I urge you to think about it. Don't do it.' And, of course, some of the Army chiefs were there listening to the same conversation I was, and they were shaking their heads. We failed on that one. There should have been no Bay of Pigs. Because, intelligence indicated that the Russians didn't have guts enough to do anything about it if we did something. But, that was a gamble. That was a calculated risk.

SOF: A former head of the Smithsonian Institution has written that he resigned because of the Enola Gay controversy. What are your impressions with the performance of this individual and others responsible for the Enola Gay display and associated displays commemorating the end of World War II?

Gen. Tibbets: You are talking about Dr. Harwit. He was a revisionist of the first order. The only thing I can say about him is that I didn't like the man. When I looked at him, my skin creeped. He didn't impress me as a person that knew what he was doing. Of course he was trying to rewrite history, and his academic career was in question and he was fighting for it. You see, McAdams ahead of him, said he was going to convert the Smithsonian to a university to teach. That's where the revisionists come in. It's in writing that McAdams said that. That's why the Enola Gay sat for so many years out in the open. They wouldn't let 'em bring it in.

SOF: Some critics of U.S. wartime decisions say that the use of atomic bombs could have been avoided because Japan was already defeated. What is your answer to that?

Gen. Tibbets: I'll tell you one thing. You couldn't tell the guys that were out there fighting, that they [the Japanese] were defeated ... In 1959, when I had the Sixth Air Division at Tampa, Florida, the Japanese Self Defense Force sent four people to tour the United States and look at the equipment and how it was used, that we were giving to them to protect themselves. I had the largest air division in SAC. So they sent these people to MacDill where I had my headquarters. I got a call that they were coming and when they would be there, and they would have with them, two Japanese language students who were in the United States at Chicago getting English language training.

When they got there they spoke damn good English. My instructions were "you and your staff and your wives will have a cocktail party and dinner and entertain these people, and don't have the women on one side of the room and the men on the other. Mix it up. Make these people feel comfortable." The day came, they arrived, they came into the club, we were waiting for 'em and I met 'em and shook hands with 'em, names were exchanged, which by interpretation didn't mean anything, we bowed, they bowed. Through the interpreters I said



Richard Nelson, (above, right) radio operator on the Enola Gay's historic flight, chats with his former skipper. (below) Get two pilots together and the air battles are re-fought. Here L. L. "Bill" English, a P-51 pilot who flew out of the hard-won American base on Iwo Jima, shares a war story with General Tibbets.



I would like to have you gentlemen mix with my staff and make yourself at home, have a drink and we'll have a bite to eat later. I'm backed up against the wall with a can of beer in my hand, watching to be sure they would do what I'd told 'em to do. A man wearing blue clothes walked up, stuck out his hand and said, 'I'm Fuchida [Mitsuo

Fuchida]. Shall we talk about it?' I did a double take. He said, 'I led the attack on Pearl Harbor.' I said, 'Man, you sure fooled us!' He said, 'What the hell do you think you did to us?'

That started it. He was a graduate of Harvard, so he could speak English. We carried on, he had a beer, also. We were drinking beer and he said, 'You did the right thing. You know the Japanese attitude at that time, how fanatic they were, they'd die for the Emperor. Can you imagine what a slaughter it would be to invade Japan?' I said, I could imagine, yes. He said, 'It would have been terrible. You did the right thing. The Japanese people know more about that than the American public will ever know.' His final quote, and I've quoted him several times, he said, 'Every man, woman and child would have resisted that invasion with sticks and stones if necessary.'

SOF: Critics of the decision to use atomic bombs on Japan have noted that the U.S. did not use atomic bombs on Germany but used them on Japan not only for revenge for Pearl Harbor and other grievances; but also because of racial hatred. How would you answer these critics?

Gen. Tibbets: My instructions were to have a split operation, self-dependent to bomb simultaneously in Europe and Japan. We picked on the Japanese? We wouldn't bomb the Germans because they had white skins? Oh, yes we would have!

SOF: Was that Ent [General Uzal G. Ent]?

Gen. Tibbets: No. That was the instruction that came down from Washington, D.C. to Ent. He repeated it to

Continued on page 68

Brigadier General Paul W. Tibbets, Jr.

Born Quincy, Illinois, 1915. Graduated Western Military Academy; attended University of Florida, University of Cincinnati. Entered Army Air Corps, 1937, received wings at Kelly Field, Texas; assigned Lawson Field, Fort Benning, Georgia. Became Group Engineering Officer, 3d Attack Group, Hunter AFB, Georgia. February 1942, engineering officer with 29th Bomb Group, MacDill Army Air Field, then Commander 340th Bomb Squadron, 97th Bomb Group, training for overseas movement.

June 1942, led first American B-17 raid over occupied Europe, plus two dozen more combat operations from England. October 1942, North Africa. January 1943, reassigned 12th AF HQ, Algiers, Assistant Operations OIC bomber operations, returning CONUS March 1943 for B-29 program. March 1944, assigned Grand Island, Nebraska, as Director of Operations.

September 1944, assigned to Atomic Bomb Project as Air Force OIC, responsible for recruiting, organizing, training personnel for bombing mission to end war with Japan. Flew first atomic bomb mission against enemy forces, dropping "Little Boy," Hiroshima, Japan.

Post-war technical adviser to USAF commander of Bikini project. August 1946, assigned to Air Command and Staff School, Maxwell Air Force Base. In 1947, assigned HQ USAF as Director, Strategic Air Division. June 1950-August 1954, served Eglin Air Force Base as B-47 Project Officer; CO of Proof Test Division. Graduated Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, 1955. Served as Director of War Plans, Allied Air Forces, Central Europe, February 1956, assumed command of 308th Bomb Wing, Hunter Air Force Base, Georgia. January 1958, assumed command 6th Air Division, MacDill AFB. After final tour at Pentagon, last assignment to India as Deputy Chief, U.S. Military Supply Mission. Retired 1 September 1966, having served more than 29 years active duty.

—R.R.

SNIPING

2000

by Maj. John L. Plaster, USAR (Ret.)



With the 21st Century looming before us, and a decade of sniping developments coming to a close, now is a fitting time to see how sniping has advanced and to where, most likely, it will evolve.

As with other military affairs, the most momentous mega-trend affecting sniping is the collapse of the Soviet Union and, with it, the end to both the Cold War and the threat of all-out war. At the start of the new millennium, the realistic threats are short conflicts in the open expanses of Southwest Asia, or the mountains of Korea, terrain suited for long-range fire. Meanwhile, the newest brand of "limited war" is armed-peacekeeping duty, exemplified by Bosnia and Haiti, again a sniping environment due not to terrain, but policy restraints.

Driven largely by TV coverage, there's a new public and political expectation that firepower must be applied with discretion and precision. Old-fashioned "collateral damage" resulting from dumb bombs and blindly sprayed machine guns is out, replaced by smart bombs, stealth fighters and exacting rifle fire.

Combine these trends and what have you got? An expanding requirement for precision rifles and the men who use them. Already, the USMC has supplemented their traditional scout-snipers with Designated Marksmen, to place even more optically equipped riflemen in Security Force battalions and MP units.

Police sharpshooters are not being left out of this evolution. Today it seems every law-enforcement agency with more than 20 sworn officers has its own tactical riflemen, and for good reason: Hundreds of hostages' lives have been saved by police sharpshooters, proving their worth and securing a permanent role in the justice system. It's always been a given that police sharpshooters' fire must be discrete and precise, so doctrinally and operations-wise, they're ahead of the mega-trend. Police sharpshooters will benefit greatly from the military investment in precision-shooting technologies for *operations other than war*, because much of the resulting gear and weapons will apply equally to their largely urban setting.

Range-Finding Technologies

Since range-estimation error is the primary cause of long-range misses, quite likely the greatest recent contribution to precision rifle

New Rules Of Engagement For Precision Shooting

effectiveness has been the fielding of hand-held laser range finders. We began the 1990s with heavy, bulky, laser range finders costing \$10,000 a unit, soon evolving to smaller high-quality Leica Geovids and Swarovski RF-1s costing one-quarter of that price. Most recently, we've seen the second generation of Bushnell lightweight Lytespeed lasers. Priced less than \$500 and ranging out to 800 yards, this latest Bushnell is revolutionary because any law-enforcement agency or military unit can now afford to outfit its sharpshooters with a laser. Those pricier Leica and Swarovski units are sturdier with such good glass that they can do double duty as binoculars, justifying their higher cost.

Swarovski's also leading the way toward the next evolutionary step in range finding with its LRS Laser Ranging Scope. With a press to its touch pad, an LRS-equipped sniper can range instantly to wherever his reticle is pointed, up to 1,000 yards, then he either holds for this distance, or adjusts the scope's target knobs.

The mil-dot reticle, which did not even exist until the 1980s, has become standard fare for most sniper scopes, with Leupold now offering it as an option for its Vari-X III scopes; Burris has just fielded a new scope with target knobs and a mil-dot reticle. My preference is the Schmidt & Bender reticle, which offers mil-dots for exact ranging when there's enough time, plus a step-scale for quickly bracketing a target's height when it's shoot fast, or not at all.

Seems Everybody's Building Good Rifles

The 1990s saw "accuracy" evolve from a fuzzy, feel-good concept to a measurable standard: Snipers demanded rifles capable of firing match-grade ammo into groups one minute or less. They got what they demanded.

Remington bolt-action Model 700s dominated the American market and much of the Western world, with custom-built versions produced by McMillan, McBros and ROBAR the choice for elite



The Accuracy International AW Rifle, the first purpose-designed, bolt-action sniper rifle, spawned a continuing revolution in rifle development.

special-operations and counter-terrorist units. The U.S. Army's M-24 Sniper System is based on the Remington 700, as is the USMC's M-40A2. Probably eight out of 10 U.S. police snipers are armed with a Remington 700 PSS rifle.

Meanwhile, the world's first, purpose-built, bolt-action sniper rifle, not just a modified hunting arm, was fielded by Olympic Gold Medal rifleman Malcom Cooper's British-based firm, Accuracy International. Malcom's superb, but pricey, AW and AWP rifles set a new standard for factory-built bolt guns, and soon were adopted by police and military in 25 countries, including the United Kingdom, Sweden and Spain. An AWP is in my personal rifle battery.

Following close behind Accuracy International came Finland's Sako with their truly outstanding TRG-21, another purpose-built, bolt-action sniper rifle. I recently test-fired one in Europe and came away singing its praise, as did my sometimes-partner, Albuquerque Police SWAT sniper Neal Terry. Both these AI and Sako rifles are ergonomic-friendly: They seem to shoot themselves.

Other European purpose-built sniper rifles boasting great ergonomics include the excellent SIG-Sauer SSG3000 and Mauser's Precision Rifle, the SR-93.

Perhaps feeling the competition of these European rifles, all of which feature detachable box magazines practical for fast reloading and to protect and segregate different kinds of ammo, Remington and Winchester recently developed detachable-magazine variations of their bolt rifles.

But the improving quality of rifles has not been limited to leading industrial countries. The Czech Republic's CZ now offers an advanced ergonomics sniper rifle, complete with fluted barrel, highly adjustable stock and detachable box magazine.

Nor must rifles cost thousands of dollars to shoot adequately. The Savage 110 Tactical, which typically holds groups to one minute, remains the best buy on the American market, coming in at well under \$500.

Emergence of Sniper-Quality Semiautos

It was the USSR that produced the world's first purpose-built, semiauto sniper rifle, the famous Dragunov. Although its sleek lines seem newer, the reality is that this rifle was designed in the 1960s using Korean War technology.

The only other semiauto initially contending with the Dragunov was the U.S. M-21 System, a scoped, accurized version of the M14 service rifle. While adequately accurate, the M-21 proved a temperamental creature, demanding continuous tuning for peak performance.

At the start of the 1980s, serious snipers preferred bolt weapons, but that changed when H&K introduced its superb PSG-1, the Ferrari of semiautos both in performance and price. By the early 1990s, respected firearms designer Eugene Stoner, working with Knight's Manufacturing, produced America's first purpose-built sniper-grade, .308 semiauto, the SR-25. Meanwhile, the M14/M-21 continued to evolve, both at the hands of military armorers and private-sector gun makers, with Springfield Armory prominent among them. Eventually, an updated version, the M-25, was fielded in special-operations units, with a simplified gas system, an improved trigger and a McMillan stock replacing the resin-saturated wooden version.

Phoenix-based gun builder, Arms Tech, Ltd., customized Browning's BAR semiauto rifle in .300 Winchester Magnum for U.S. SpecOps units. Boasting a stainless, match-grade barrel, a McMillan stock and target-grade trigger, the Arms Tech BAR saw action in Somalia, and was well-regarded for its accuracy, its great range, and its terminal ballistics.

Sniper weapons based upon the AR-15 came to the forefront in the 1990s, with at least a dozen American customizers finding ways to free-float barrels, tune jerky triggers and smooth those buffers and bolts. One small accessory that yielded disproportionate improvement was Quality Machining's drop-in titanium firing pin,

whose lighter weight cut the AR-15's lock time. By the close of the '90s, accurizing features that had begun as *iffy* improvisations had evolved into reliable standards.

With quality semiautos now closing on bolt rifles for accuracy and reliability, it's an open question whether they'll overtake manually operated guns in the next decade.

Stocks And Ergonomics

One of the greatest leaps forward, in which I've played a role, is a new aluminum bedding system and ergonomic stock, produced jointly by Gunsite and Autauga Arms. The first product of their "Skunkworks" R&D consortium, the Gunsite-Autauga Ultra-Accurate Rifle System attaches a full-length anodized aluminum frame to a Remington 700 or Winchester 70 at the action screws. The



(above) By '90s' end, semiauto .50s, such as this sleek Stoner SR-50, are attracting more military interest than earlier bolt rifles. (left) View of protest crowd outside Port-au-Prince, Haiti, City Hall, photographed by a U.S. Army sniper from his overwatching position. This type of mission will surely continue. (below) On peacekeeping missions, such as in Bosnia, U.S. Army snipers will continue to play key defensive roles in surveillance and countersniping.



Mark H. Milstein

system's strong but graceful ergonomic stock slides over this frame, but it's hex-screwed horizontally, so its frame — not the stock — holds the barreled action. Thanks to the design work of Gunsite chief gunsmith Ted Yost, the barreled action fits quite low in the stock, lowering the bore axis considerably for a more natural and comfortable hold, and perhaps a 25% reduction in felt recoil. During prototype testing, we found that the Ultra-Accurate System cut Remington 700 ADL groups by one-half to one-third, a phenomenal result.

Actually, the Gunsite-Autauga system is my second design, having earlier worked with Choate Machine and Tool to develop a highly ergonomic sniper stock with aluminum V-block bedding, which I hope inspires a generation of new stocks which proclaim, "aesthetics be damned, ergonomics rule!" Demand for ergonomic stocks isn't widespread yet, but just as it took a few years for synthetic stocks to be accepted, the day is not far off that synthetic ones need



The Dakota Arms Longbow Tactical Engagement Rifle, an excellent example of medium-range (1,000-1,500 yards) exploitation offered by the .338 Lapua Magnum cartridge. (right) High-quality European gear — a Mauser SR-93, .300 WinMag Rifle, and Zeiss stabilized binoculars are issue items to the Stuttgart, Germany, SWAT Team.



no longer resemble the wooden stocks they replace.

Another evolving area of stock technology is bedding. At the start of the 1990s, it was common to glass-bed rifles using various epoxy mixtures, the downside being that solvents eventually would soften the epoxy. An assortment of aluminum rails, frames and bedding blocks are overtaking the epoxy method, which probably won't be around in another decade.

Barrels And Harmonics

Fluted barrels really began to take off about 1994, and soon thereafter even Remington and Winchester were offering them on their high-end rifles. Beyond aesthetics, a properly fluted barrel reduces weight while retaining the advantages of a heavier barrel, in particular, the larger cooler surface and resistance to warpage.

More and more custom rifle builders began to use only finely lapped barrels, while standard-grade barrels could be improved by cryogenic tempering and undergoing the Black Star processing, which dramatically reduces bore friction. Black Star's tapered-bore barrels, which I have yet to test, generated considerable interest.

Muzzle brakes turned out to be more of a passing fad than a permanent presence. Except for their use on especially powerful magnum hunting rifles, and .50 cal. rifles, their amplified muzzle report and blast eventually put them out of fashion. The Browning BOSS harmonic tuner, which originally incorporated a muzzle brake, soon had a second version, *sans* brake, due to customer requests.

The BOSS did not take off as strongly as many people, myself included, thought it would, undoubtedly because it requires time and ammo to refine the exact settings for your own rifle. Interestingly, a year ago at the SWAT Roundup in Florida, I handled a factory-installed BOSS tuner on an FN-built CAR-15/M4 Carbine. The FN engineer who brought this experimental system assured me that the BOSS worked as well on assault rifles as on Browning sporting rifles.

Everybody's Building .50 Cal. Rifles

A few months ago, in Eastern Europe, I watched a demonstration of a prototype .50 caliber rifle. It was dismal, cutting bushel-basket sized groups at 500 meters, but it probably will be adopted by that country's army, a perfect example of what seems to be a rush to field .50-caliber rifles. One year ago, Russia added a 12.7mm rifle to its inventory, and even Croatia now has its own new .50 caliber. What's curious is that a number of countries are building these guns without first defining a role for them, just sort of sticking them out in infantry platoons as support weapons, and, therefore, making factors like weight, length and terminal ballistics, *not accuracy*, driving specifications. Is it a long-range, anti-materiel weapon or a close-range platoon support weapon? Who knows? Who cares?

While bolt-action .50s traditionally have proven more accurate, there's been such growing international demand for military semiautos that .50 cal. makers must either build a semiauto or lose business. Therefore, although the 1990s began with an assortment of very accurate bolt-action .50s and just one semiauto, by the decade's close virtually all the new guns — Stoner/Knight, Pauza, McBros and Harris — were semiautos of varying accuracy. Among these designs, particularly interesting is Eugene Stoner's. Using a

side-mounted magazine to lower the receiver to the ground, he was able to compress the whole gun into a minimalist design reminiscent of the German MG-34 machine gun.

As a direct result of counter-sniping experience in Bosnia, several countries have opted away from the .50 caliber to shoot through barriers, and specified, instead, the .338 Lapua Magnum because it's powerful but portable, enabling the counter-sniper to maneuver quickly and engage his barricaded foe. During a visit to Beretta in Brescia, Italy, I learned the Italian government was purchasing 285 counter-sniping rifles in .338 Lapua Magnum, because its field soldiers had found this chambering the best counter-sniper round in Bosnia. European builders of .338 Lapua Magnum sniper rifles include Sako, Erma and Mauser.

On this side of the Atlantic, the most impressive .338 Lapua I've come across is the excellent Dakota Arms Longbow rifle, a purpose-built counter-sniper rifle.

But we haven't seen the end of ever-bigger sniper weapons. Recently, at least three gun makers have begun offering their rifles in 20mm.

Ammo Developments

Some of the most exciting ammunition breakthroughs have been in propellants. Primex Technologies, a spin-off of Olin/Winchester-Western, perfected a new process for tamping powder to burn more efficiently. Their High Density Propelling Charge alternatively can produce increased velocity at the same chamber pressure as a normal load, or propel a heavier bullet with the same muzzle velocity, or maintain current muzzle velocity at a lower chamber pressure. The result is a 10% performance boost, giving a .308 the ballistics of a .30-06 at no greater chamber pressure than the lighter loads. Reflecting computer studies of plasma physics, the Finnish propellant maker, Vihtavouri Oy, developed N500 high-energy powder, "capable of loads previously unheard of."

While these powder developments won't have an impact on sniping for a few years, that isn't the case with new bullets. In a cooperative project involving Picatinny Arsenal, Lake City Army Ammunition Plant and Sierra Bullets, a new 175-grain boat-tail hollow-point sniping load was developed. Designated the M-118 LR (Long-Range), the new load is only two grains heavier than the old M-118, and seven grains more than the traditional 168-grain Sierra Matchking, but a combination of propellant, weight and bullet shape have pushed the .308's transonic limit at least another 100 meters, meaning it will fly true and straight better than 900 yards. Federal has begun loading the same Sierra 175-gr. match bullet in a new commercial .308 load and everyone who's

tried it raves about its long-range performance.

One interesting ammunition trend has been the increasing number of companies loading .308 match. At the start of the '90s, it was hard to find any match ammunition other than Federal; by the decade's close it seemed everyone was loading it, from Remington and Winchester and Hornady to Lapua and Norma, even Black Hills.

One intriguing development is moly coating, in which molybdenum is coated on a bullet, a process perfected and marketed by NECO's Roger Johnston. A moly coated bullet zips down a barrel with less resistance, and leaves a slick moly residue in the rifling, filling and smoothing tiny machining imperfections. Thus far, I've only come across Black Hills' .308 match loads incorporating moly coating, putting the South Dakota ammo maker ahead of larger companies. Research and testing on moly coating continues because, for example, it can so reduce barrel friction that there's an actual drop in bullet velocity, the result of a bullet zipping along the rifling too freely to build peak pressure. This technology is nowhere near being fully explored and exploited.

Rebirth Of The .223 for Sniping

Just five years ago, I was recommending against the .223 for law-enforcement sharpshooters because it wouldn't reliably penetrate auto windshields and suitable match loads weren't available. Both of these shortcomings have been rectified.

Leading this .223 renaissance is Federal, which offers a 69-gr. match load and a 55-gr. glass-penetrating Tactical Load, while Hornady recently introduced its 75-gr. match Tactical Application Police (TAP) Precision round, and Remington fielded a 60-gr. match load.

Concerns about .308 over-penetration have been largely overcome by the .223, of which hollow-point match projectiles rarely exit a body. Taking this over-penetration issue a major technological step forward have been companies such as Longbow Ammunition, headed by Special Forces retiree John Mullins, which has developed a match-grade frangible projectile of metal powder and inert material that vaporizes almost on impact, yet which retains integrity long enough for suspect neutralization. In my own tests, the Longbow round produced 100-yard groups as small as 0.537-inches, although it's so lightweight that I wouldn't employ it for more than about 100 yards. Longbow also is developing a .308 match frangible round so that over-penetration can be avoided without switching to a .223.

Specialized Sniping Ammunition

Concerning the penetration issue, there equally have been developments in the opposite direction, producing advanced projectiles tailored to penetrate glass and hardened materials. Again, Federal was ahead of the pack, offering a 165-gr. bonded .308 Tactical Load which performs superbly, although I've found it not quite as accurate as their 168-gr. match. Last spring, German police competitors arrived at the Autauga Arms Super Sniper Shootout with 180-gr. machined copper solids, a European solution to the glass-penetration issue. Lapua's new glass-penetration FOREX Tactical round uses a 185-gr. round-nose bullet with a machined jacket.

For breaching light armor, Winchester/Olin is manufacturing a military load which places a .22-cal., tungsten-steel sabot in a .308 cartridge. I'm also aware of ongoing experiments with depleted uranium projectiles which offer amazing penetration possibilities.

Optics and Rifle Scopes

At the start of the 1990s, most rifle-scope objective lenses were 38-40mm diameter, but they started to creep wider and wider. By the close of the '90s, many scope builders were offering 50mm and even 56mm objective lenses, responding to shooters' desires for better vision in low-light conditions. There can't be much more growth because these wider lenses require mount-

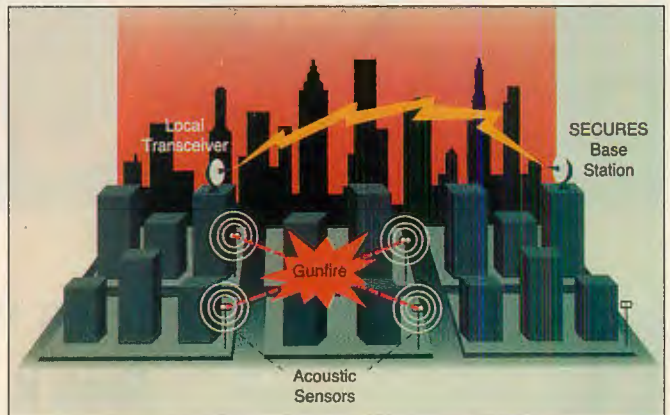
ing the scopes higher and higher above the receiver.

A parallel trend has been toward wider tubes, with more and more offerings in 30mm perhaps because American companies are feeling the competition from Europe, where the 30mm is almost standard for quality rifle scopes. Here, though, is room for further growth. A few months ago, I tested two prototype scopes with 40mm tubes, which transmit more light with less distortion because there's less bending of light at either end of the tube. If you already have a 50mm objective lens and must mount the scope well above the receiver, why not have a 40mm tube?

And talking about prototypes, when will Leupold field its Mk-IV



(above) True thermal-imaging sights, such as this Texas Instruments W-1000, became compact enough for use on rifles. (left) The Arms Tech Super Match Interdiction Rifle modified Browning's .300 WinMag semiauto into a sniper-grade weapon. (below) Alliant Techsystem's undersea-warfare technology is being modified for a counter-sniper application.



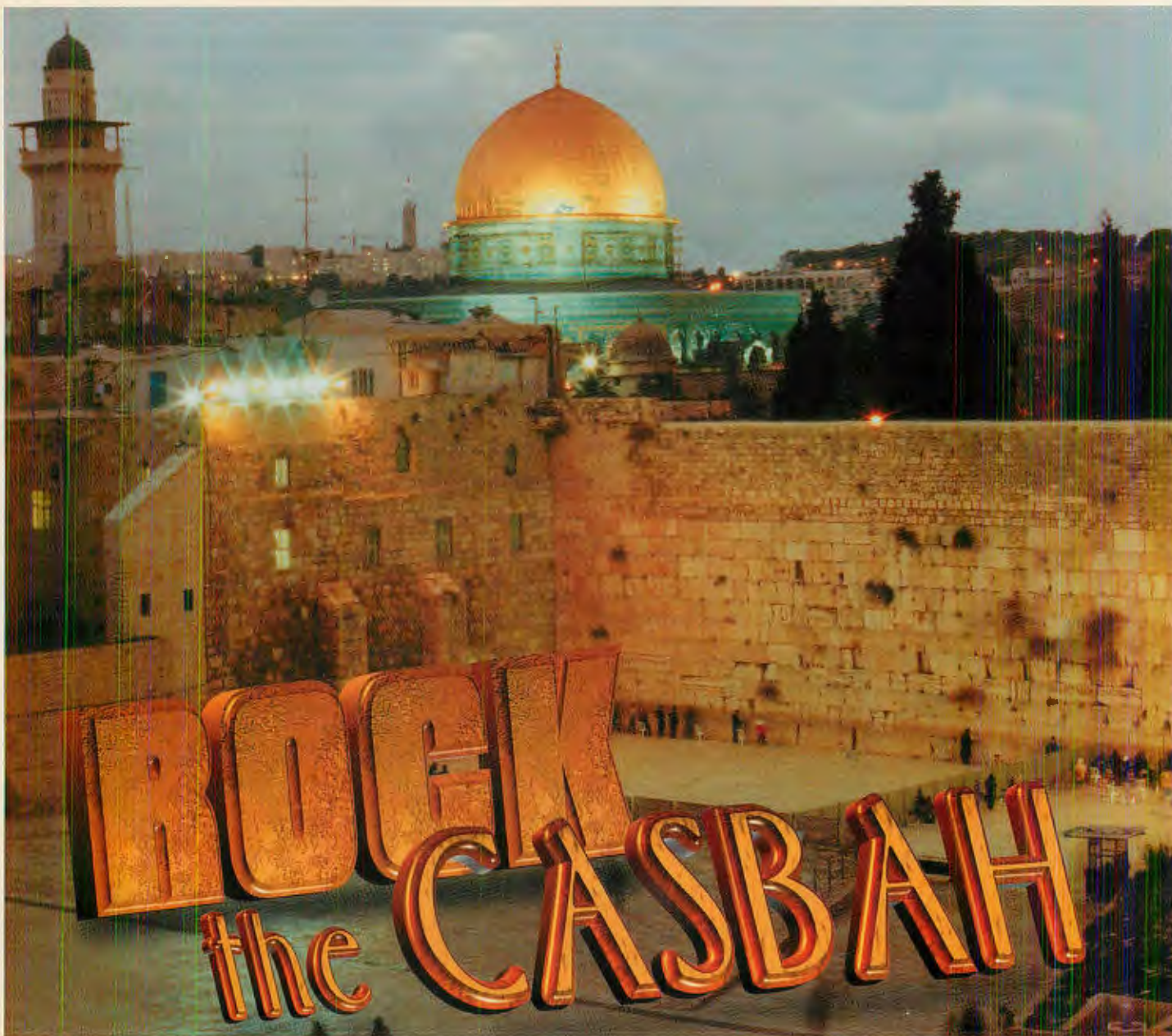
variable magnification scope, which reportedly has been prototype tested for several years?

Night-Vision Devices

For most of the 1990s, the U.S. Army was developing its first-ever night-vision device intended especially for a sniper rifle, the AN/PVS-10, which actually is a day/night scope in one package. Although the Army appears ready to purchase the AN/PVS-10, I am aware of some serious shortcomings which have shown it to be inferior to the Simrad 250, a less expensive unit already in production. The Simrad, of course, is a Gen III device that clamps onto a daytime scope's objective lens, allowing the sniper to continue using his day-time scope's normal windage and elevation.

In recent tests, the PVS-10's optics were shown to be inferior to the Leupold MK-IV it's supposed to replace for daytime use, as well

Continued on page 70



Hebron, West Bank — It's easy to hate Palestinians, I mused, as the sixth chunk of cinderblock in as many seconds smashed against the wall behind my head.

Together with two soldiers from the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) 101st Airborne Division's Apache platoon stationed in the contested West Bank city, I counted off five seconds after the latest volley of rocks rained down on our position before quickly scampering up a rusted staircase to the roof and what I thought would be safety.

Wrong.

The two dozen or so Palestinian youths, together with their Palestinian Authority police officer "handlers," had quickly moved down the steeply sloped street to the concrete wall just in front and below our position to begin the next phase of their attack.

While some Palestinians taunted us from

Text & Photos by **Mark H. Milstein**

open positions, others used the wall as cover as they began to slingshot stones and chunks of metal at us.

"Apache One to Control," called out the platoon's radio operator to the IDF base in the city's center. "Can you let DCO [District Coordination Office] know we've a problem here? Please advise."

"*Allah u akhbar* [God is great]," the Palestinian youths screamed.

Another volley of rocks and bolts splattered around us, and as both IDF soldiers took aim with their M16 assault rifles the other five members of Apache platoon, who with a simple but effective flanking move had come up the street perpendicular

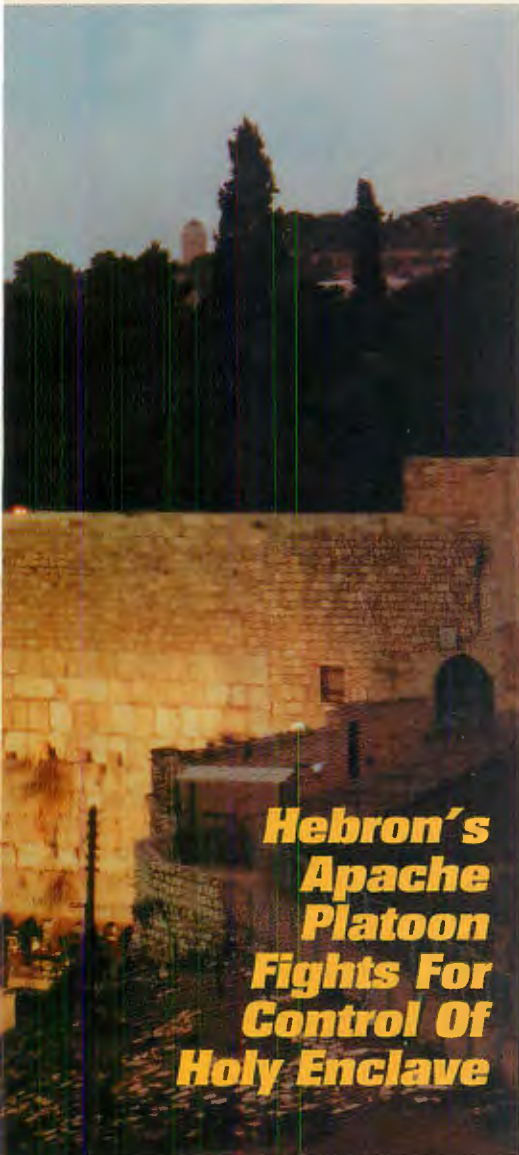
to the wall, surprised the Palestinian youths and forced them to immediately withdraw into the labyrinth of streets in Hebron's market district.

"Do you still think that they're just a bunch of rock-throwing kids who shouldn't be taken seriously?" IDF Sergeant Hillel Brenner, a native of New Jersey, asked me as we walked back to base.

"If you or any of my men had been hit by any of those rocks you'd either be seriously injured or maybe even dead. Maybe even those cameras of yours would be broken," Brenner continued. "It's not a joke in Hebron. It's not just kids throwing rocks. Every stone has a meaning. Every time there's friction between us and them it could lead to conflict or even worse."

The rocks, I soon learned, were just the tip of the iceberg.

The crux of the Hebron problem isn't really the presence of a few hundred radi-



Hebron's Apache Platoon Fights For Control Of Holy Enclave

calized, religious Jews and the large number of IDF soldiers stationed there to protect them, although it is an allied problem. The problem, in a nutshell, is control over a biblical-era tomb.

Who controls *Ma'arat HaMachpela*, the Tomb of the Patriarchs, the burial site of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Leah, controls history. And who controls history, at least in the Middle East, controls the destiny of the tribes who lay claim to the area today known as the State of Israel.

Firestorm Of After-Effects

The 3,700-year-old tomb is the second holiest site in Judaism, after the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and is also considered by Muslims to be one of the holiest sites in their religion. The Israelis re-occupied the Tomb after the 1967 war, having been barred from the site for more than 700 years by successive Muslim rulers.

Today, the Tomb and its perimeter are controlled by Israeli ministry of interior border police who oversee two separate entrances, one for Jews and another for Muslims. Security is incredibly tight, with Jews and Muslims, Israeli soldiers and journalists, alike, forced to empty their pockets and pass through a series of metal detectors before being allowed into their respective areas inside the Tomb. Even soldiers have to check their weapons.

The Israeli security forces on station seemed skittish and paranoid, and they have good reason to be if history is to be a judge. It was only a few years ago that a deranged member of the Hebron Jewish community walked over to the Muslim entrance of the Tomb and calmly gunned down more than 20 worshippers before being subdued and arrested by Israeli soldiers. Days of rioting followed and it took some serious negotiation between the Israeli government and Yassir Arafat to restore order.

"It only takes one act of provocation to set off a firestorm of after-effects," said Brenner. "One guy and a strong belief in what 'his' God says is correct and the next thing you know you've got World War III. Hebron is a trigger spot. It's one dangerous place. Don't kid yourself. Both sides are deadly serious. One rock hits the wrong person. One settler walks down the wrong street.

Bang! It's all over with."

It was time to head back to base, talk with the commander and get a taste of Israeli army chow. A few Israeli air force F-16s came in low and fast over us, flaring their bodies to increase the sound as they flew south toward a bombing range somewhere in the Megev Desert.

One of the first things that strike you about the IDF is its youth. It's not unusual to meet senior officers only a few years out of high school, and unlike most conscript armies there is no lack of *esprit de corps*.

Mandatory Draft

Every able-bodied man in Israel must serve three years' active duty, with women serving two years and eight months. All able-bodied Israelis also do reserve duty well into their early forties.

All soldiers *SOF* spoke with in Hebron were quite gung ho, although most openly complained they would rather pull duty in southern Lebanon. Urban combat missions, according to many members of the 101st Airborne Division, didn't allow for much space to fight and the situation in Hebron didn't make it easy to identify who was or who wasn't the enemy.

Although the IDF is quite happy to host the occasional journalist, getting even the most basic information concerning deployment and numbers out of such a security-sensitive organization can be a little difficult.

"About how many troops does the IDF have stationed in the Hebron area?" I asked Captain Dror, the commander of the three platoons of 101st Airborne Division troops stationed in Hebron's Shoada Street barracks.

"I don't know," Dror answered with a straight face. To the question of how the Division took a flying snake for its symbol came the same "I don't know" answer.

What Capt. Dror would say was that his three platoons had at their disposal two M113A APCs which hadn't been used since his arrival two months earlier, as well as their assault rifles, and an armory of low- and high-tech weapons designed for use in urban settings.

"Our tour of duty in Hebron is four months," Capt. Dror explained. "We have here at Shoada St. barracks 104 men. Because the facilities are limited, however, we're forced to 'hot-bunk' the men.

"As you can see," Dror went on, "the facilities are very simple. We don't even have enough beds. As soon as someone comes off of patrol he takes the bed of another soldier preparing to go out."



At the crux of unrest in Hebron is control over a biblical-era tomb known as *Ma'arat HaMachpela*, (dome pictured in background) the Tomb of the Patriarchs. The 3,700-year-old tomb is the second holiest site in Judaism after the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and is also considered by Muslims to be among the holiest sites in their religion. In the foreground is the Wailing Wall. (inset) Among players in the Hebron conflict are a few hundred radicalized, religious Jews and the large number of Israeli Defense Force soldiers stationed there to protect them. Here, an Israeli soldier, armed with an M16A1 carbine, prays at the Wailing Wall next to a Hassidic Jew. Hebron, a small city of about 60,000, is divided into two zones. One, a small section of the central city, is the Israeli zone. The vast majority of the city is a zone controlled by the Palestinian Authority.



A Hassidic Jew from South Africa protects himself from Palestinians on the streets with the help of an M16A1. Although Jews are presumed safe in the small central zone controlled by Israel, Palestinians frequently bombard them with slingshots near the borders of the zones.



In the two rooms I visited, equipment, dirty clothes, weapons and ammo carpeted every square inch of space not occupied by a body.

Life In The IDF

All soldiers based in Hebron must pull one-on, one-off shifts. That means that when they're not patrolling, they're either eating, sleeping or maintaining their equipment. Life in one of the IDF's most elite units is not easy, but all soldiers do get three days leave every two weeks.

The IDF, compared with most armies, also feeds well. Fresh salads, unlimited portions and solid desserts were being served

up throughout the days and nights *SOF* spent in Hebron.

"Let me introduce you to Lieutenant Ohad," Capt. Dror said as another platoon prepared to hit the streets. "He's my first lieutenant and he'll be leading this patrol."

Ohad gathered the six men of this patrol at the barracks gate, and quickly went over the route they would take.

"I'll give you a short overview of the situation here in Hebron," Lt. Ohad said as the patrol staggered itself on both sides of a street leading into Hebron's Casbah (market).

"We are here to protect the settlers who are here to administer the Tomb," Lt. Ohad explained. "We're also here to protect the

Palestinians from the settlers, if that type of a situation ever arises."

"Since January 1997, when the IDF pulled out of Hebron [the city is now under Palestinian Authority control with the exception of the Tomb and the Jewish housing areas in the city's center]," Ohad continued, "the city has been divided into two zones. H-1 is the Palestinian Authority zone, and H-2 is the Jewish zone. We are not permitted to enter H-1, and the Palestinian Authority [PA] forces cannot enter H-2. That's why there's the DCO. They coordinate any official interaction between us."

The patrol then entered the market and began walking through its thin, crowded



The Apache Platoon, armed with M16A1 carbines with optical and C-More red dot sights, is among three platoons, of the IDF's 101st Airborne Division, charged with patrolling the streets of Hebron to discourage hostile Palestinian youth. (right) Soldiers confront a PLO soldier after a rock-throwing incident in Hebron. Palestinians frequently hide behind walls after dark, shooting rocks and large steel bolts with their slingshots at Apache soldiers.



alleyways. Since the market borders H-2, the IDF has placed observation posts (OPs) on every roof top overlooking the Casbah. They've also erected a 7-meter-tall mesh fence at the Arab market-end of Shoada St. to prevent rocks, Molotov cocktails and the errant RPG from landing in the synagogue.

Bullets Meant For Us

All eyes were upon us, and the voices of the Arab shopkeepers fell silent as we passed. Although some elderly Arabs smiled hello at the soldiers, no one in the patrol was stupid enough to believe that somewhere in the Casbah there wasn't a bullet or a bomb with their names on it.

The patrol passed a group of young Palestinian men standing in front of a spice shop and Lt. Ohad demanded that one of them produce his papers. The patrol stopped, and fanned out as best it could in the cramped, damp tunnel-like alley. Four out of five weapons faced the market, with the fifth pointed at the Palestinian men.

"Ok," Lt. Ohad told the shaken Palestinian, "you can go."

Ohad said that if and when the IDF captures someone during a routine check who has committed a "criminal act" they are expected to turn them over to the PA, who then is expected to process the complaint.

"That's supposed to happen in theory," Ohad said, "but in reality the PA just turns them loose. We used to have total discretion with prisoners when the city was under Israeli law, but now things have changed. Of course if the guy shoots at us or we catch him throwing a bomb then we take him into custody. Then all that stuff about his rights are waived."

The patrol exited the Casbah at the guard shack in front of the Jewish housing area adjoining Gross Square. A number of orthodox Jewish school children were walking back home from their religious academy accompanied by two teenage Jewish boys armed with UZIs and pistols. Five minutes later two middle-aged Hassidic Jews and a young boy walked by. One of the men was armed with an M16.

In fact, after nearly a week in Hebron,



Apache Patrol soldier checks paperwork of Palestinians in the Hebron market (above). To enter the Israeli zone for work, Palestinians must have identification, a passport and appropriate paperwork. (left) Israeli border police patrol search a Palestinian in the Israeli section of Hebron. Keeping Palestinians unarmed is a major role of Israeli police and soldiers charged with maintaining peace for Jews in their small section of Hebron.

it became apparent that nearly every male Jewish settler, and even some women, carried weapons. For Jewish settlers in Hebron, or for that matter anywhere on the West Bank, traveling also seemed to involve severe security precautions. Heavily armored buses regularly took settlers from Hebron to other nearby settlements and back to Jerusalem, and quite a few settlers told *SOF* about drive-by shootings by irate Palestinians.

"You don't live here," said one Hasidic

Jewish settler from South Africa, "so don't pass judgment based on what I need to protect myself, my family and my religion. The Arabs want to kill every Jew."

The patrol began making its way out of the Jewish settlement and back toward the border between H-1 and H-2.

"We've always got trouble from this area," Lt. Ohad said. "One of our guys was shot at the other night from a rooftop

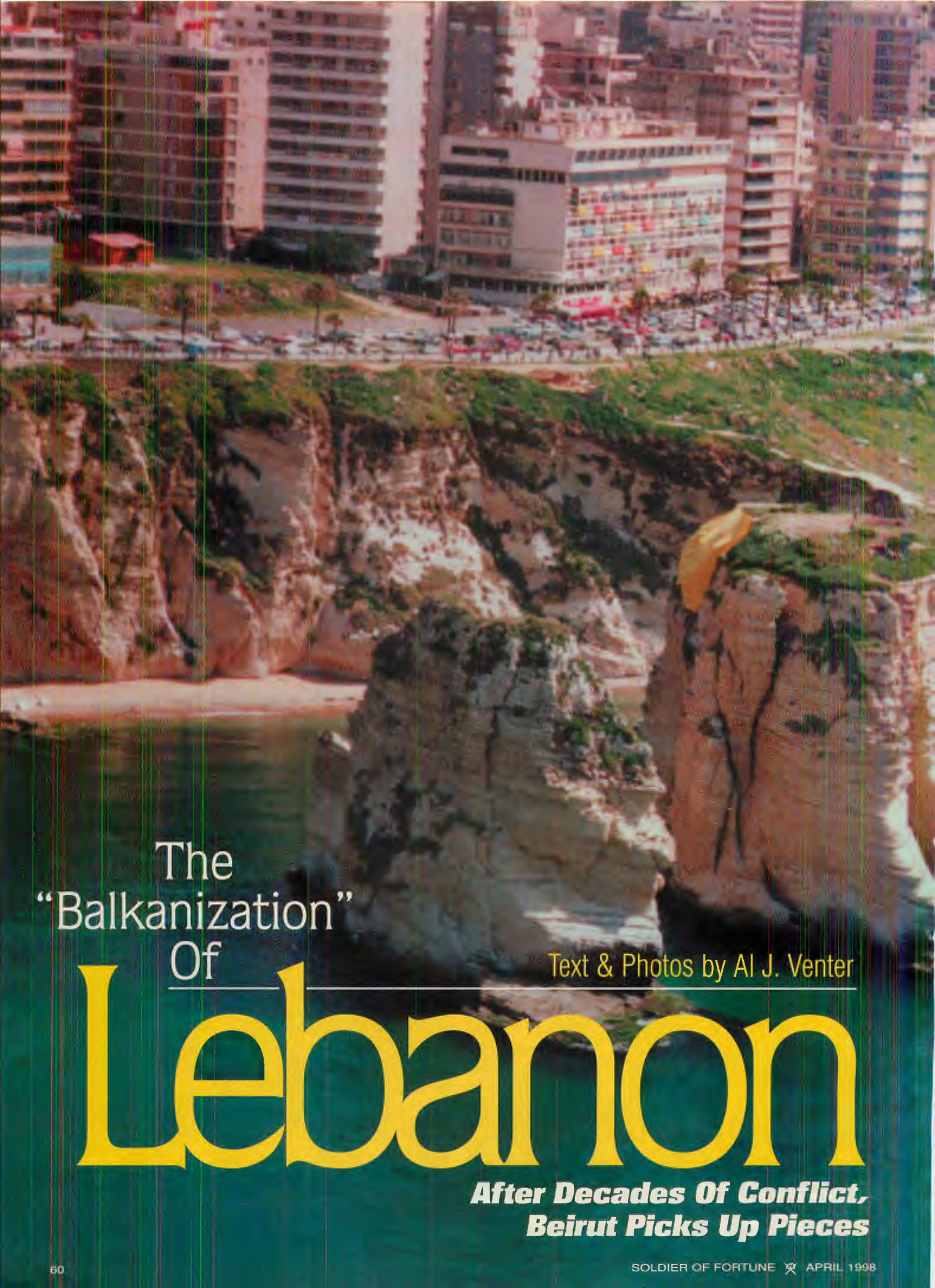
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In an effort to maintain peace in Hebron, the Apache Platoon constantly patrols the market, known as the Casbah, ready to bring order. In Hebron, it's not just kids shooting rocks and bolts



from slingshots. Every stone and bolt has a meaning. Every time there's friction between the Apache Platoon and Palestinian youth, it threatens serious conflict or worse.



The
“Balkanization”
Of

Text & Photos by Al J. Venter

Lebanon

***After Decades Of Conflict,
Beirut Picks Up Pieces***



Beirut is different. After a bitter civil war that seemed to last forever, it needs to be. At least Americans are welcome again, though they're not queuing up to go there. Someone from the Lebanese army was supposed to meet me on arrival at Beirut Airport, probably the only international air terminal that reminds me of a *souq* (Arab market). There were uniforms everywhere. My man wasn't. So what's new in the Middle East?

I latched on to a couple of crazy Irishmen posted to the United Nations contingent along the Israeli border. They took me to the Wild Geese Club in what was once the Christian sector of the city. The name says it all: part Irish, part Leb, rebellious and well-stocked with Kilkenny and Guinness draught. It probably wasn't the sort of dive you'd find in the Bronx or San Francisco's Bay area.

A group of kids, seniors in their last year of school, were there celebrating a birthday. The band was wild and the booze ran. Halfway through, a youngster — obviously a little high — caused a commotion. In a tick the guns came out.

Imagine it: a bunch of juvenile revelers having a party, cake and all. One of their number, some mother's son, suddenly became a target. No shots were fired, though the fight did end up in the street. It was close.

Welcome To Beirut!

For some, arriving in Beirut can be like stepping off into a void. It's real enough, like the Holiday Inn the combatants transformed into a high-rise chunk of Ementhaler cheese. Twenty floors tall and dominating much of West Beirut, the holes still wait to be patched.

Nor does it help to see Joseph Sullivan, chairman and the American representative of the Joint (cease-fire) Monitoring Committee being driven about the city, sirens wailing. While there, he moved about in a seven-vehicle entourage with machine guns mounted fore and aft. When he stepped out, as I watched him do when he visited Army Headquarters at Yarze, he was completely surrounded by heavies. Those guys meant business.

In recent years, the Lebanese capital has conjured up all sorts of images. Some are real enough to warrant concern.

What you can't escape are the few remaining shell-blasted, skeletal ruins (a lot with people still living in them) that poke up untidily in the dust in the center-city area where the Green Line used to run like an oversized bunker throughout the length of the city. That, despite one of the world's largest urban renewal programs.

Visions of AK-toting warlords, even today, are a recurring nightmare. Who can forget the 99 independent militias in the Balkanized cluster of enclaves that evolved during the course of the war? With the exception of *Hezbollah*, *Amal* and some Palestinian units still fighting in the south, all are long gone. So is the very real fear of being grabbed and making the evening news.

Memory can be fickle. Not everyone remembers Beirut as a crucible of war, until recently, where simmering national, tribal, ethnic, religious and civil differences finally exploded into a conflict that lasted more than 15 years. That's all gone, but there is still a powerful military presence, much of it Syrian.

Though the war ended in the early '90s, one's senses are sharpened by the sort of routine military patrols in the streets of Beirut that you find just about everywhere in the Middle East. It's an interesting paradox that there are more guns fielded by Israeli soldiers and patrols in the streets of Haifa, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv today, than in any comparably-sized Lebanese city.

Assad's Forces

There wasn't anyone I met in my two weeks in Lebanon that didn't despise these interlopers. They strut about the place as if they own it. Yet no one has the chutzpah to ask them to leave. If they did, many observers agree, the fighting might start again.

Undoubtedly, a Syrian army presence in Lebanon is odious. If there is a *Mukhabarat* (secret police) roadblock up ahead, logic usually dictates that you seek an alternate route, simply because they can (and do) arrest whomever they please. There's zilch anyone can do about it.

Nor do they let you forget it was a Syrian secret agent who assassinated Maronite President Bashir Gemayel in 1982. Five years before that, Assad had tribal Druze leader Kamal Jumblat (Walid's father) killed for daring to cross him in public.

A joke about Assad's occupation forces currently does the rounds in Beirut:

A guy rushes into a Lebanese police station after having been strip-searched by Syrian agents. He is breathless.

"That Swiss stole my Syrian watch," he says pointing at the plain-clothed Mukhabarat at a nearby checkpoint.

"The what?" asks the Lebanese policeman, incredulously.

"That Swiss stole my Syrian watch," the man says again, louder.

"Surely you mean that Syrian stole your Swiss watch?" the officer asks.

"Right! But you said it, not me!"

Those who were in Lebanon during the civil war can't help linking many present-day images to the mid-'80s.

While there is a richness and a mendacity in Lebanese political life, it tends towards violence if not properly channeled. Sadly, the Lebanese propensity for vengeance can be feudal in its intensity. For instance, during my visit last September there were shootouts between irate drivers



(top) The United States gave Lebanon these American-made M48A5 MBTs. Here, they're on parade through the streets of Beirut as part of the National Day celebration. (above) This M113, a gift from Uncle Sam, is part of an Army strong point on the main road leading into Beirut.



One of several new skyscrapers being built since the cease fire in West Beirut. (inset) They're patching up the holes in many of the high-rise buildings that were made like Swiss cheese during the war. These structures overlook the historic Places des Martyrs, where the Green Line once ran.



In Lebanon, women serve in military uniform and go through the same basic training as men.



Lebanese Army (left) patrols in the south, where tensions often mount close to the Israeli border. (right) Travel the length of the country, north to south, and when things are tense you will encounter dozens of roadblocks set up by the security forces.

on Lebanon's public roads. Most were caused by slights, many of them imagined.

It's also very easy to die behind the wheel in Beirut. Apart from the fact most Lebanese weave through traffic like demons possessed, mayhem on the roads is of an Arab intensity. Beirut makes the streets of Rome appear civilized.

Add to that potentially explosive mix 3.5 million people (with another million or so living in exile).

There are Christians of half a dozen sects. When war waged, some Christians were as bitterly opposed to each other as they were to those of the Islamic faith; a very tough and uncompromising Druze community living in the Shouff; Muslim Shi'ites — again, some of the left — others reactionary; a preponderant number of Sunnis, also Moslems (who don't like the Shi'as); an occasional Turk, Armenian or Kurdish refugee, and, of course, the dreaded Syrians. Assad maintains a 35,000-man occupation force in Lebanon.

Taken together, you have one of the most cosmopolitan and racy communities on earth.

Cosmopolitan Garbage

Beirut today has 11 daily papers and two more in English. No day passes without every one of them giving Israel wide coverage. Also, the American University of Beirut has attained such good standards over the years (in spite of few Americans on the staff) that there are nationals from every Arab country clamoring to get in.

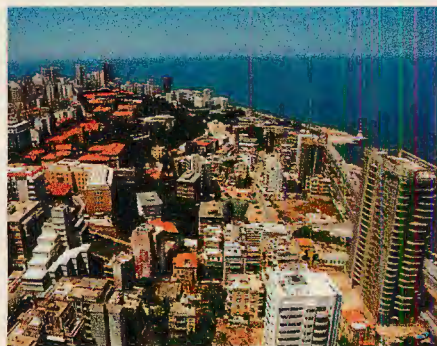
They even opened a Beirut version of the

Hard Rock Cafe. It stands on the Corniche, where the entire city seems to gather after work to watch the sun dip toward the west — a time when all seem amiable.

Still, a car bomb blew a building apart while I was there. The army thought it was someone settling personal differences. What a way to go — differ with your neighbor and he wipes out your entire family.

Nearly everyone in Beirut today is clustered together in an indeterminate hodgepodge of suburbs, villages and settlements wedged between the mountains and sea. Coming in to land at night there are strings of fairy tale lights that stretch up and down the coast as far as you can see. It looks as enchanting as Disneyland, but the shadows hide a lot.

Garbage is a perennial problem. It's everywhere, and Lebanese solve such problems their own way. An unwritten law



A chopper's-eye view of West Beirut. The Corniche runs along the sea at right. Despite the ravages of war, Beirut remains a beautiful city.

allows one to dump garbage in only two places — the left hand side and the right hand side of the road.

Elsewhere, a succession of small wars seem to go on interminably. They rarely touch Beirut, and then only in the *Dayiya* from where those who oppose the Israeli presence in the country operate.

Occasionally an Israeli air force jet will come in out of nowhere and pound a target in the stifflingly overcrowded, fundamentalist suburbs to the south. It is here that someone with money invariably gets attention.

You don't rate in these impoverished, squalid streets if you are not of the faith. This is, after all, domain of the *mullah*. Every one of them is as intemperate and uncompromising as were those in Tehran at its worst.

There are as many billboards featuring the bearded scowl of the Ayatollah Khomeini in Beirut as those of *Sayed Hassan Nasrallah*, general secretary of the Party of God. Just don't try to take photos. You could end up answering a lot of questions if you do.

The result was that the few times I drove to Harek Horeik, where Hezbollah has its headquarters, I felt distinctly plummy, Western and exposed. And if you aren't sure where or where not to go in Beirut, the issue is possibly exemplified by Louis Armstrong's retort to a fan's request for a definition of jazz: "Man, if you gotta ask, you'll never know."

Still — though one glimpses it only in patchy, inconsequential vignettes these days — Beirut has a captivating charm of its own, nurtured largely by an enormous residual wealth. It was a financial capital of the Middle East 20 years ago, and much of the money came from Arab oil.

In truth, Lebanon's history goes back further, long before a succession of internecine wars tore the nation apart. These people were civilized when our forefathers were trying to master the wheel.

One also needs to be reminded that before Greece became famous for its philosophers and Rome for its Legions, the Phoenicians had created the greatest trading nation in what was then the civilized world. They taught the people of Athens to read.

In its recent prime — as the travel posters phrased it — Beirut really was the Jewel of the Med. Those who visited back then recall an opulent, vogue conurbation. Not for nothing did sybarites refer to it as Paris of Mediterranean. Cannes and Nice and Saint-Tropez simply didn't rate.

Depending on one's perspective, the good news is that Washington has lifted a long-standing travel ban to Lebanon for Americans. That happened last August, though few are prepared to take the chance, especially since Westerners are still prohibited from travel in the south.

And if you do make any sort of contact with the Party of God or the Islamic *Jihad* — organizations classified as "Terrorist" by the State Department — likely as not the

FBI will open a file with your name on it.

Play By The Rules

Have your act together before entering Beirut's main terminal on arrival from out West.

No visa, no entry. Don't even try it. Several on my flight did. One obstreperous hopeful attempted to stretch credibility. He flashed dollars and claimed presidential privilege. There was no arguing with a gun in his face and he went back to Cyprus that night.

Then, once through the barriers comes the awesome spectacle of a thousand sweaty bodies and hands that create a throng that even the army sometimes can't control. It was a seamless web of chaos. Fingers would appear from nowhere to embrace me,



A sign of the times in Beirut are the many new buildings and offices opening up.

and, I suspect, my wallet. It took muscle to hold on to everything in that last desperate push for the gate.

"Taxi?" called a man, all teeth. Like most Beirut taxi drivers he was a predator.

I made the mistake of catching his eye. I knew then that I was his, the infidel incarnate and a captive fare into town at six or eight times the going dollar rate. This shifty-eyed bastard with the sallow complexion of a frog stuck to me like shit to a blanket. Ahmed had become my keeper.

Anywhere else on earth I'd have told him to fuck off. Not in Lebanon. He could be anyone — not impossibly a cop who might have been tipped off I had arrived fresh from Tel Aviv. My proboscis, unfortunately, says it all.

Hezbollah, too, I'd been warned, are known to keep track of new arrivals in the country, especially those with American stamps in their passports. I have a lot.

Adding to my worries was the fact I'd been quoted only two days before, in the *London Times*, on Iran's potential for building nuclear weapons. Since it's Iran that bankrolls Hezbollah's revolution, I smiled gracefully and started bargaining. By then, Ahmed had a grip on my bag.

It stayed that way until my Irish buddies rescued me. They knew enough Arabic to cause a lot of scurrilous talk of someone's genealogy before we sped to the Wild Geese Pub.

Big Glass Buildings

They have their own view of the world in Jounieh, the up-market Christian enclave to the north of the main city that wouldn't be out of place in one of Paris's better-heeled *arrondissements*.

There, they reckon, an optimist in Lebanon is the man who builds a glass-fronted building. On my first morning in the country I was greeted by acres of it.

For all that Lebanon has been through, it seems improbable that anyone would wish to tempt fate by spending millions on a facade that would cost a fortune to fix if a single Israeli jet fighter broke the sound barrier over the city. Curiously, there are more brand new glass and marble high-rise buildings in Beirut than in any other city in the Near East — Haifa, Tel Aviv, Damascus and Cairo included.

Jounieh has other attributes. It boasts dozens of private clubs on the waterfront. And those that frequent them — including some of the best-looking doe-eyed women in the world, with figures to match and bikinis that leave absolutely nothing to the imagination — aren't short of cash.

These are curious anomalies in an Arab environment. It is also true that the two other largest concentrations of expatriate Lebanese are in France and the United States. A fair proportion of the population moves between the two cultures. A lot of this money came from Africa, from the diamond mines of Angola and Sierra Leone.

The clubs were out of my bracket, but being with the Lebanese Army, we ate at various officers' clubs. Jounieh has one of the best. Also it's cheap; a four-course meal put us back \$5. Don't touch the wine! A glass of plonk from the Beka'a costs half that, which is a pity because some of the wines from this Syrian-occupied area are excellent. Lebanon's largest vineyards are within sight and sound of Hezbollah training grounds in the valley.

Anyway, the local Almaza beer is great. If I didn't know better, with a similar flavor, colour and texture, I could have sworn it came from the same brewers that produce Israel's Gold Star beer.

Head For The Coast

Just about everything worth experiencing in Lebanon happens along the coast. Beka'a is interesting too, but it's not healthy to linger there. There are exceptions: The Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich was recently the soloist at a concert held among Baalbeck's ruins.

An extremely dangerous, quarter-finished, double-lane highway fringes the sea from Naqura in the south (where the U.N. has its headquarters) to El Aabboudiye on the Syrian frontier in the north. There are

Continued on page 71

KIMBER'S



NEOCLASSIC

Compact pistols chambered for the .45 ACP cartridge now totally dominate the handgun market in this country. There are two very obvious reasons: the ban on magazines containing more than 10 rounds and the recent passage in many states of concealed-carry legislation. Now that pistols holding submachine-gun-size magazines are no longer readily available, the 9mm Parabellum cartridge is swooning into oblivion. And rightfully so. If you can no longer “spray and pray” your way through a gunfight, you are best armed with the most effective handgun round avail-

.45

A Best-Buy
For
Concealed
Carry

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

able. And, after 87 years that is still the .45 ACP and its 230-grain bullet. And further, it makes little sense to design a large pistol around a small-capacity magazine.

So, the race is on to see who can produce a .45 ACP pistol in the smallest possible envelope. In some instances that has resulted in diminished reliability. Not so with the new Kimber Compact Custom .45, which is the *most* reliable compact .45 I have ever fired. Kimber (Dept. SOF, 1 Lawton Street, Yonkers, NY 10705; phone: 800-880-2418; fax: 914-964-9340, web site: www.kimber-america.com; 1998 catalog \$2) certainly demands respect in this area. Their Government-Model-size Custom Classic .45 (See "Kimber's Fighting .45," June '97) is quite simply the best production series M1911-type pistol ever assembled and loaded with features usually found only on custom pistols selling for three times as much. The new compact model is every bit as good and ideal for concealed carry.

The dimensions approximate those of a Colt Officer's ACP Model, with an important exception that we will discuss later. The overall length is 6.5 inches. The frame is 0.40-inch shorter than the full-size Kimber Classic. The height is 5 inches and the width is 1.25 inches at the grip panels. The 3.75-inch barrel has six grooves with a left-hand twist of one turn in 16 inches. The weight, empty, is approximately 34 ounces.

Both the slide and frame are CNC mill-finished with plus/minus 0.001-inch tolerances from 4140 chrome-moly drop forgings. Both parts are heat-treated before the rails are machined to prevent the possibility of warpage. The frame's hole spacing is exceptionally precise and the holes are machined at perfect right angles to the frame's surface. With the exception of a fairly sharp edge on the top rear face of the front sight, the exterior edges on the slide, frame and protruding components have been radiused and rounded. The frame and slide of our test specimen feature a matte black oxide finish. These parts are manufactured by Kimber Manufacturing, Inc., in Yonkers, N.Y. Kimber Manufacturing also provides slides and frames to Wilson Combat and Chip McCormick's CMC.

The magazine well is beveled to assist changing magazines. The frame's feed ramp has been opened and polished, an almost standard feature on customized M1911s. Complementing that, the barrel's chamber opening has been radiused slightly and lightly polished to remove high spots. The

beavertail-type steel grip safety is internally skeletonized for weight reduction and has a slight bump on the bottom to insure that it is disconnected, even if not depressed completely. It entirely cups the hammer to prevent "hammer bite" and permit as high a grip as possible. As the front strap has also been slightly relief-cut just under the rear portion of the trigger guard, the high grip permitted by these two features lowers the bore line in relation to the shooter's hand and reduces the perceived recoil somewhat.

The flat-type mainspring housing directly below the grip safety is sharply checkered and made of black Nylon 6/6 composite. It will more than do, but for strictly cosmetic reasons, I have changed that out with a blued-steel Ed Brown mainspring housing with 30 LPI checkering that I obtained from Brownells (Dept. SOF, 200 South Front Street, Montezuma, IA 50171; phone: 515-623-5401; fax: 515-623 3896). There is no checkering on the front strap. The grip panels on *SOF's* test specimen are hand-checkered, double diamond-pattern rosewood. A later version with black checkered grip panels made of a neoprene-type material will soon be available.

The checkered steel magazine catch/release button is slightly higher than usual to provide access by the thumb without altering the firing grip, but not long enough to induce an accidental release. The pistol is equipped with a McCormick skeletonized Commander-style hammer and extended thumb safety on the left side only.

The McCormick skeletonized trigger consists of a fiberglass-reinforced Nylon 6/6 composite shoe, injection-molded on the front of a stainless-steel, spot-weld-reinforced bow, which has been deep-relieved on the bottom to reduce the coefficient of friction. Trigger-pull weight on our test specimen was exactly 3.75 pounds. The

trigger pull is as smooth as glass with a very crisp let-off. There are dual internal tangs to provide takeup adjustment and an allen-head screw at the front to adjust backlash.

A number of the frame's small components, such as the hammer, sear, disconnect, manual safety and slide latch, are made by means of a process called Metal-Injection-Molding (MIM), which was developed by NASA and first used by Kimber in their Model 82 .22 rimfire rifle. Delivering almost all the structural strength of steel forgings at much less cost, this process also permits the manufacture of intricate components with tight tolerances. In this process, powdered chrome-moly steel is combined with a polymer carrier and then injected into a somewhat over-sized mold. During a sintering process, high temperatures extract the polymer and cause the part to shrink to exactly the desired dimensions. The resulting grain structure is more dense than that achieved by standard investment casting techniques and after heat-treating the strength is significantly greater.

The single-column, detachable box-type magazine is an M1911-type without a removable floorplate. It holds seven rounds and has McCormick's famous Shooting Star two-piece follower and follower spring. The floorplate has two holes for the installation of magazine bumper pads. Colt Officer's ACP Model magazines can be used in the Kimber Compact Custom.

There are deeply cut cocking serrations at the rear of the slide only. Since this pistol is equipped with a stainless-steel full-length guide rod, it cannot be "press checked" in the manner originally taught by Jeff Cooper, and thus the front cocking serrations found on the Kimber Custom Classic .45 would assist in this maneuver. Wrapped around the guide rod is a Wolff silicone-chrome recoil spring. The ejection port has been lowered

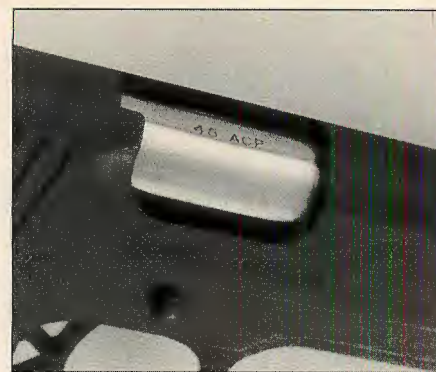


If you can no longer "spray and pray" your way through a gunfight, you are best armed with the most effective handgun round available. The new Kimber Compact Custom .45 is the *most* reliable production-series compact M1911-type pistol ever assembled. Loaded with features usually found only on custom pistols selling for three times as much, the Kimber Compact Custom .45 is ready to go, right out-of-the-box.

and flared in the now standard "custom" manner to enhance ejection reliability and protect empty cases from denting. The firing-pin stop has been beefed up to provide a snug fit in the slide's extractor notch and prevent the heat-treated custom-type extractor from rotating in the slide.

The McCormick Pro Low Carry front and rear sights are both dovetailed to the slide. The 1/8-inch wide front sight blade is forward sloping, rounded at the front, and as I stated earlier far too sharp at the top rear to permit the important "tap, rack, bang" drill. This is, however, easily corrected with a Swiss file and Dremel tool, and I have already done so. The rear sight has a deep, 1/8-inch wide square notch with the rear face serrated to reduce glare, as is that of the front sight. The rear sight assembly is retained in its dovetail on the slide by an allen-head screw. Both sights are deep enough to permit the installation of self-luminous tritium inserts. The sight radius is 5 5/8 inches.

Black Hills Ammunition (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 3090, Rapid City, SD 57709; phone: 605-348-5150 — call for the location of your nearest dealer. If there is none, Black Hills will ship to you at retail.) once again provided all rounds used to test the Kimber Compact Custom .45 pistol. Three types of Black Hills .45 ACP ammunition were used during our test and evaluation of Kimber Compact Custom .45: 230-grain



Kimber Compact Custom .45 features McCormick's skeletonized "Commander"-type hammer, extended thumb safety, and beavertail-type grip safety. Grip safety has a slight bump on the bottom to insure that it is disconnected even if not depressed completely. It entirely cups the hammer to prevent "hammer bite" and permit as high a grip as possible. The ejection port has been lowered and flared in the now standard "custom" manner to enhance reliability and protect empty cases from denting.

Full Metal Jacket (FMJ) roundnose with a muzzle velocity of about 850 fps, 185-grain Jacketed Hollow Point (JHP) with a muzzle velocity of about 975 fps and 230-grain JHP driving out of the barrel at approximately 880 fps. Both of the JHP bullets are Speer Gold Dot types. All 230-grain roundnose ball ammunition will over-penetrate as it will travel up to 26 inches in soft tissue. Use this load to "wash out" the bore after shooting cast bullets. Most 185-grain JHPs will over-expand and under-penetrate. I continue to use these for practice on targets that do

not shoot back. My carry load remains the Black Hills 230-grain JHP, which will expand to almost .70 caliber and penetrate in soft tissue well past the minimum 12 inches required, but less than the 18 inches that signifies over-penetration.

I have now fired more than 1,500 rounds during my test and evaluation of the Kimber Compact Custom. There have been no stoppages of any kind. Reliability is a serious concern when the M1911 design is reduced to an abbreviated envelope, and always has been. The first serious attempt at

Most of the time, even compact handguns like the Kimber Compact Classic .45 will be carried in a belt holster. Why? Simply tradition in my opinion. Most of us practice the presentation from a belt scabbard in the manner formulated by Jeff Cooper, commonly from the strongside position and in a few instances at the crossdraw location. Armed professionals have usually shunned shoulder holsters. I suppose this is because they are seen so often

Shouldering The Kimber Compact

worn by TV and Hollywood cops, who tactically demonstrate every possible incorrect technique.

However, shoulder rigs have several advantages. Except for extremely high-ride, strongside holsters, nothing will conceal a handgun more effectively than a well-designed shoulder holster. The key here is "well-designed" and the single most important parameter is that the rig stay put so that the pistol is always in exactly the same place at the commencement of the drawstroke. Most shoulder holsters do not prevent the handgun from slowly shifting downward and back while you wear it. A good shoulder holster also does a better job of distributing the weight of a handgun and extra ammunition over your entire torso. When you have to carry a pistol and spare magazines all day, this means less fatigue and fewer backaches.

I started using Sam Andrews' Monarch shoulder rig more than a decade ago during the war in El Salvador. When wearing civilian clothes on the mean streets of San Salvador, it provided maximum comfort and concealment. Its name comes from the butterfly-

shaped connector plate of the harness, which may be inverted for a better fit on those with smaller width shoulders. This full-swiveling connector is made of the same soft suede leather as the rest of the harness. Thus, there is no hard plastic connector pressing into the spine when seated or driving. The superbly-designed lower backstrap prevents forward swaying and eliminates the need for tie-downs. The holster is fully suede-lined and has a compact belt loop at the rear for off-harness use. The holster's thumbbreak is fitted with a one-way directional snap. Options for the Monarch include knife sheaths for the Gerber Mk I or Cold Steel Tanto, the Stroud Ten-Pack which holds 10 magazines retained by adjustable tension and a belt tie-down on the back, a backup/ammo combo that holds a backup handgun and magazines for the primary weapon, and a breakaway cuff case. The Monarch shoulder rig itself sells for \$125.



Sam Andrews (Andrews Custom Leather, Dept. SOF, Route 4, Box 48, Alachua, FL 32615; phone: 904-462-0576 — send \$2 for catalog) has been crafting custom combat holsters for 21 years. Located in north central Florida, near Gainesville, and just one hour south of the Georgia border, his customer base circles the globe, with a significant percentage of law enforcement personnel and now an even larger clientele of civilians, as a consequence of the spate of concealed-carry legislation passed throughout the United States in the last several years.

Sam uses only number-one grades of oak-tanned cowhide. All of his holsters are hand-molded and stitched with heavy bonded nylon thread, which is sealed to protect against the environment. Like his Monarch shoulder rig, many of his holsters and belts feature a suede lining.

—P. G. K.

a production series compact M1911 was the Detonics which first appeared about 15 years ago. These pistols were plagued with functioning problems. Out of every magazine fired you could count on at least one "stove-pipe" (an empty case stuck half way out of the ejection port and held there by the chamber end of the barrel). As the frame and slide dimensions are reduced, the distance the slide travels during a complete recoil and counter-recoil cycle is correspondingly diminished, as is the time frame during which this takes place. If everything does not happen precisely as it should, there will inevitably be a stoppage. If the magazine follower spring does not drive the next round up against the magazine's feed lips quick enough, a failure to feed and chamber will result. If the empty case is even delayed by a millisecond in extraction from the chamber, that case will never make it completely out of the ejection port. And so on.

There are solutions and several can be noted in the Kimber Compact Custom. First of all, the slide is slightly longer than that of the Colt OM. Just enough so that the slide travel and cycle interval are increased to significantly enhance the operating reliability. In fact, the slide's length of travel is quite close to that of the Colt Commander. Next, Kimber's designers have increased the mass of the barrel, which is a cone type without a bushing and thus fitted directly to the slide. This helps to slightly, but significantly, retard the time interval of the recoil/counter-recoil cycle. Finally, the recoil spring is somewhat heavier than usual and this helps to slow the recoil stroke and inhibit battering of the slide and frame; and also to provide a more positive thrust during the counter-recoil stroke to insure proper stripping of the top round in the magazine.

At 7 yards, the distance under which the majority of gunfights with a handgun take place, and firing off-hand from a strong Weaver position, the Kimber Compact Classic .45 will place all rounds into a 1.5-inch group. It doesn't need to get any better than this for gunfighting. As a consequence of its all-steel construction, felt recoil is hardly greater than a full-size Government Model.

Because of its full-length recoil spring guide and abbreviated slide, disassembly procedures for this pistol vary somewhat from those employed to fieldstrip a conventional M1911-type. First, remove the magazine and safely clear the pistol. Lock the slide to the rear. Note that there is a small disassembly hole in the middle of the recoil-spring guide rod. While the slide is retracted insert the tool provided or a bent paper clip into the hole. Release the slide and move it forward until the semi-circular tab at the rear of the slide stop is aligned with the disassembly notch on the slide. Remove the slide stop from the left side of the frame. Separate the slide from the frame by sliding it forward off the frame. Remove the recoil-spring guide rod and compressed recoil spring by withdrawing them rearward and then separating this group from the slide.



Kimber Compact Custom .45 frame (left) is identical in size to that of the Colt Officer's ACP Model (right).



The Kimber's slide (bottom) is slightly longer than that of the Colt OM (top). Just enough so that the slide travel and cycle interval are increased to significantly enhance the operating reliability.

Tip the barrel's link forward to clear the recoil-spring tunnel and then pull the barrel clear of the slide.

Remove the grip panels from the frame. No further disassembly of the frame components is usually required for routine maintenance. However, removal of the firing pin and extractor should be included with fieldstripping. With a drift of appropriate diameter, push inward on the spring-loaded firing pin and slide the firing-pin stop down and off the rear of the slide. Remove the firing pin and its spring. Gently pry out the extractor. The extractor claw should be cleaned thoroughly and the extractor inspected for loss of tension, one of the most common causes of malfunctions in the M1911 series. The magazines

should be disassembled, as well. After cleaning and lubrication, re-assemble in the reverse order.

This is the first production-series compact caliber .45 ACP M1911-type pistol that requires no custom gunsmithing to bring its reliability up to acceptable standards. It's ready to go, right out-of-the-box, and, like the full-size Kimber Custom Classic .45, it has all the custom features you need on a fighting .45. In conclusion, the Kimber Compact Classic .45 is simply outstanding.

Suggested retail price of the Kimber Compact Classic .45, with a matte black oxide finish, is \$677. A stainless-steel version is available for \$767. A lightweight version with an aluminum-alloy frame will eventually be available. ❧

Kimber Compact Classic .45

SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber: .45 ACP.

Operation: Locked-breech, short-recoil, semiautomatic, single-action trigger system with frame-mounted thumb and grip safeties.

Weight, empty: 34 ounces.

Length, overall: 6.5 inches.

Width: 1.25 inches at the grip panels.

Barrel: Six-groove, left-hand twist with one turn in 16 inches.

Barrel length: 3.75 inches.

Magazine: Single-column, detachable box-type magazine with seven-round capacity and McCormick's Shooting Star two-piece follower and follower spring. Provision for the installation of magazine bumper pads.

Sights: McCormick Pro Low Carry fixed front and rear sights, both dovetailed to the slide. Front sight blade is 1/8-inch in width. Rear sight has a deep, 1/8-inch-wide square notch with the rear face serrated to reduce glare, as is that of the front sight. Sight radius is 5 5/8 inches.

Finish: Matte black oxide.

Price: \$677.

Manufacturer: Kimber of America, Inc., Dept. SOF, 1 Lawton Street, Yonkers, NY 10705; phone: 800-880-2418; fax: 914-964-9340; web site: www.kimberamerica.com.

T&E summary: Most reliable production-series compact M1911-type pistol ever assembled. Loaded with features usually found only on custom pistols selling for three times as much. Ready to go, right out-of-the-box. Meets all armed-professional standards. An exceptional value for the money.

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Renaissance Man

Continued from page 51

me. By the time we got ready to go, hell, the war in Europe was over with. You don't go drop a bomb on a situation like that. My job was pointed out to me by General Ent. As I walked out General Ent's door his last words were a caution: 'You've got a lot of responsibility. You've got more authority than I've got. If you use it wrong, or if you fail, I could see you winding up in prison. You *might* be a hero ... Last thing: I can't tell you what to do, nobody can. Do what you think is right.'

six of them were cut up and dropped in the Japanese Sea. Where's the seventh one? In North Korea.

SOF: Huh!

Gen. Tibbets: Yeah. That's where it is.

SOF: How did the U.S. select atomic bomb targets in Japan, including the selection of both primary and secondary targets?

Gen. Tibbets: Atomic bomb targets were selected after very careful consideration by the joint target group in Washington in the Pentagon. The requirements were, number one, it has to be a military target. Number two, it was preferred that the target be one that had never been attacked before. Any damage that came they wanted it to be from the use of the weapon, nothing preceding that.



USAAF

Many decisive battles in one blow: Hiroshima lies in ruins; a few days later Nagasaki suffered a similar fate, and Imperial Japan surrendered, saving uncountable American and Japanese lives.

SOF: Some historians have argued that the reason for the U.S. using atomic weapons on Japan was to demonstrate this powerful new weapon as a warning to the Soviet Union.

Gen. Tibbets: ... Nobody ever thought about the Soviet Union. Next, talking about we wanted to impress the Russians ... we wanted to keep the secret from the Russians! We didn't want to impress 'em with a damn thing! Because we didn't want anybody to know about it until it was used on Japan.

SOF: Some researchers have argued that Japan was working on its own atomic weapons throughout the war: ... the shipment of uranium oxide found on a German U-Boat en route to Japan ... discovery of and prompt destruction of cyclotrons in Japan ... reports that Japan detonated an atomic bomb in a Korean harbor in 1945. In your opinion, if Japan had won the race to produce atomic bombs, would they have used atomic weapons on U.S. targets?

Gen. Tibbets: Japan working on its own [bomb]? Yes, they certainly were. There's all kinds of authentic information today with all that's been released, they had seven cyclotrons, and only six have been found ...

SOF: Did planners consider the idea of a demonstration [bomb drop], and if so, why was it rejected?

Gen. Tibbets: ... With something that gives 2-1/2 G bumps, 10 miles away ... where are you going to put it and where are you going to drop the bomb. You'd blind 'em if they looked at it. Let's say that the damn thing was a dud. It didn't make sense. The element of surprise is the greatest thing you can use. You've got to surprise them.

SOF: It seems impossible to separate your name from Enola Gay, Hiroshima, atomic bombs, etc. Bearing that in mind, what is there about Paul Tibbets that you would like people to know about?

Gen. Tibbets: If you go by the quiz shows ... more people know the name *Enola Gay* than they do Tibbets. The airplane is better known than I am ... To people that would understand it, I'd like to be remembered as a guy that was given a job that nobody had ever done before and I did it.

A retired naval electronics officer, SOF correspondent Richard Rongstad is the author of Rongstad's Worldwide Military Links, online at: <http://members.aol.com/rhongstad/private/milinksr.htm> ☒

Rock The Casbah

Continued from page 59

over there in H-1. We can't touch him [the shooter]. We can't even fire back because we can't tell which window or which house it's coming from."

Lieutenant Ohad then told the patrol to hold fast while he showed off an empty lot he said was a favorite for a team of Palestinian shooters who have been peppering a number of OPs with rifle and pistol fire over the past month or so.

"They aren't that sophisticated, but they're effective," Lt. Ohad said. "They use this spot for one or two shots and then they disappear. It's almost impossible to get them as well."

Rock Barrage

Then just as we rejoined the patrol a volley of rocks crashed around us, with one striking Lt. Ohad in the leg.

All eyes quickly focused on the source of the rock barrage, a half-dozen or so Palestinian kids busily regrouping themselves at the far end of a short tunnel ten meters in front of us.

The patrol calmly removed their berets and traded them for Kevlar helmets before taking cover in doorways and any recess they could find.

Another mixed salvo of rocks and chunks of brick and cinderblock came through the tunnel at our position. Two IDF soldiers jogged up stone stairs to the roof of a house overlooking the far end of the tunnel.

"They're in H-1," Lt. Ohad explained. "They know we can't go after them. All we can do is show force, and if necessary, if things become heated or if they cross the line into H-2 is use gas or rubber bullets."

Another volley came our way, and Lt. Ohad gave the order to ready their weapons. Things were heating up.

Someone, an adult voice, then began to shout at us in Arabic. Through the tunnel we could see two uniformed men, both apparently Palestinian police or military.

Ohad and two other men then slowly approached the tunnel entrance. The Palestinians came closer and began talking. The rock throwers, meanwhile, had been pushed back about 3 meters and were busy making threatening gestures at the Israelis.

Ten minutes of talking passed before Lt. Ohad ordered the patrol to proceed back to barracks.

"He's with the PA," Lt. Ohad said referring to the desert cammied Palestinian officer. "He promised to handle the kids if we withdrew, and I agreed because I don't want things to escalate.

"I could have ordered my men to shoot, but for what?" Lt. Ohad said. "It would have just created more problems. That's something we can't afford right now."

Mark Milstein, SOF's chief foreign correspondent, is based in Budapest. ✕



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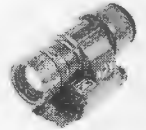
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as the Simrad's when it's mounted on the Leupold. There's a major focus problem on the PVS-10: Operators cannot adjust it for nearly as crisp an image as when looking through the Leupold-Simrad combination.

A critical problem is that when the PVS-10 washes out, due to a bright light source in its field of view, the sniper cannot see anything when the Simrad washes out. Of course, the sniper just continues to observe through the daylight capability of his Leupold scope. This is a major shortcoming because, as we've seen in Bosnia, Somalia and Haiti, U.S. forces must be capable of operating in urban areas, which obviously contain light sources at night.

Although it would seem wise to acquire the Simrad and continue working on the PVS-10, it appears the Army may be so committed to it that the PVS-10 may be adopted anyhow.

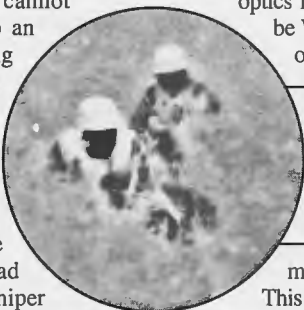
High-Tech Countersniping Developments

Due to the well publicized sniping threat in Bosnia, the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency has begun grinding away at counter-sniper technologies with some impressive preliminary results. Alliant Techsystems formerly the Defense Division of Honeywell has modified its anti-submarine undersea sound sensors to track the sound of gunfire and, at blurring computer speed, triangulate the weapon's location. While this system has worked in tests, and it was even installed to support the Atlanta Olympics, I can only wonder how long it would take a few clever snipers to confound such sensors with masking gunfire and noisy false alarms.

A more direct high-tech development is a special automated turret and sensor system for the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, which reportedly allows its 25mm gun to rotate

and engage a suspected sniper location as quickly as the culprit fires his first shot.

These high-tech developments are not uniquely Western. Just before its collapse, the USSR was testing a system which burst a flashing pyrotechnic so it would reflect off any optical devices within line-of-sight. These optics reflections originally intended to be Western anti-tank guided-missile optical trackers would then auto-



Thermal-imaging sights and airborne FLIR stripped away foliage, smoke and darkness to expose soldiers — a great threat to concealed snipers.

matically be plotted and engaged. This device could have equal utility for detecting a sniper team's binoculars, spotting scope and rifle scope.

And What's Next?

Sierra ballistics chief Kevin Thomas thinks we're much closer to Buck Rogers than most people realize. "The M-24 and the M16 will probably be the last cartridge firearms in U.S. military history," he recently told me. "Whatever actually replaces the M16 and M-24 won't be recognizable as firearms," he thinks, suggesting the precision small-arms niche will be filled by directed energy weapons lasers, sonic waves or microwaves. Although I agree this is inevitable, I don't think we'll see these weapons soon.

What I think we'll see, in less than 10 years, will be lightweight gyro-stabilized rifles, applying technology already found in television Steady-Cams and such compact devices as Canon's stabilized binoculars. Imagine looking through powerful optics at a target 500 yards away, but instead of a jerky "Figure 8" traced by your reticle, it's a rock-steady sight picture, as solid as firing sandbagged-prone but you're shooting unsupported, standing, half out of breath! That's what a stabilized rifle will do, making 1/4-mile off-hand shots a piece of cake.

Another dramatic development, and well within our reach, I think, will be an automated electronic reticle, adjusted by an integral laser range finder and temperature gauge. The shooter just places his crosshairs

on the intended target, presses a touch pad which lazes the target for distance and records the ambient temperature, then automatically calculates your load's trajectory and shifts the reticle for dead-on firing, all in a split-second. Appreciate this conceptual leap: When the sniper pushes that touch pad, he won't think, "I'm ranging to my target," but merely, "That's my target," and as quickly as he aims, he can fire through the readjusted reticle.

Today's greatest high-tech threat to snipers, the aircraft-mounted FLIR Forward Looking Infra-Red will be minimized by development of a collapsible shield which can snap out instantly like a self-erecting tent. Along the same line, military laser range finders will have their invisible light wavelengths shifted so they're no longer detectable by Night Observation Devices, a significant compromise problem today.

Fully adjustable harmonic tuners, such as Browning's BOSS, will give way to simplified factory-installed pre-sets, offering perhaps 3—5 settings for specific standard loads, which the rifleman just clicks-in for peak accuracy. We'll also see an integrated harmonic tuner and suppressor.

The remaining wall to long-range precision shooting — wind — will remain a problem, but this, too, largely will be solved by technology. Already, American physicists, at Los Alamos, are testing exotic devices for measuring wind at distances. Great strides will be made by combining this measuring technology with super low-drag bullets of denser alloys for improved momentum.

The closing years of the 20th Century have seen such dramatic developments in rifles, optics and ammo that in the hands of a good marksman, a .308 rifle could punch round after round into nearly the same hole out to 500 yards. Today, we're close to achieving half-minute groups to 1,000 yards. And, using emerging technologies and specialty cartridges, early in the 21st Century I'm confident we'll be placing such shots consistently to 1,500 yards.

What an exciting time to be a sharpshooter!

Major John L. Plaster (Ret.), is the author of SOG: The Secret Wars Of America's Commandos In Vietnam.

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Breech Loading Bolt Action Bull Pup

Balkanization Of Lebanon

Continued from page 63

also snow-topped mountains, an hour from the shoreline, where it is possible to ski for much of the year.

Parts of it, because of the war, are prohibited to travelers. Nabatiya is such a place.

I was scheduled to visit a forward Lebanese Army position in Nabatiya on the morning the town was hit by Israeli jets. Hezbollah had apparently used the place as a staging point for a raid a week before.

So we sat, instead, and waited for the dust to clear at a well-guarded intersection at El Maamariye.

Then, when more Israeli planes knocked out some electricity pylons along the same road that we had traveled earlier — almost within sight of southern Beirut — Lt. Hussein thought we should go home. But not before we were sidetracked and hosted at one of the finest little restaurants in the Near East. It is adjacent to Sidon's ancient Crusader castle in one of the oldest ports in the world.

What was interesting was a group of aging guerrilla commanders at the table next to us smoking their *hubble-bubbles*. I didn't ask whether they were Hezbollah or Amal and they didn't say. They didn't even glance at us.

We spent time in Tyre and Sidon. Both cities reflect the effects of war and the occasional Israeli incursion, none of which helps the economy.

I asked permission to visit one of the Palestinian refugee camps as there are several in the area. My Army hosts didn't think it wise. In any event, Lebanon hardly needs to publicize the plight of hundreds of thousands of misplaced souls living under conditions that, anywhere else in the world, would have been condemned long ago.

The entrance to every Palestinian camp was heavily guarded. Each car that came near the place was searched. Or perhaps the army was a little more testy than usual because of inordinate Israeli air activity that day.

Get Tires In Tyre

Tyre, the last place you reach before the barriers go up, has one of the most unusual markets in the world. They sell cars on the quay in the harbor as they are rolled off the ship. If you strike a deal you pay your money and you drive away. No papers, no insurance, nothing. All were stolen in Europe.

For a fraction of the real value, it is possible to buy a neat little three or seven-series BMW or Mercedes with what you please. Just don't think about taking it home.

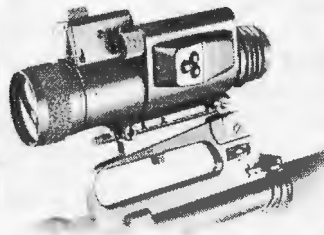
Living on the edge will always be a feature of life in the Levant. So, it seems, will the war.

Al J. Venter has been a regular contributor for much of the past quarter century and resides in Washington State. ☞



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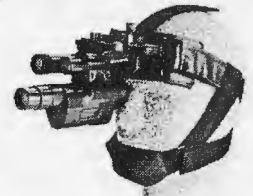
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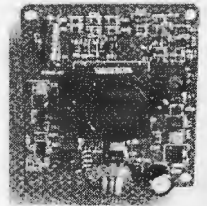
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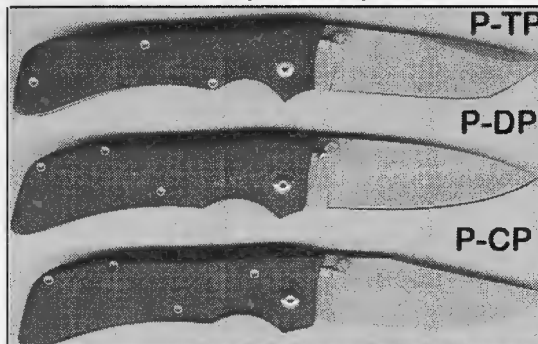


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I Was There

Continued from page 33

preventing the kick-out of any bomblets.

When all was ready we opened the doors of the site office and camera dome and taped the windows to minimize blast pressure damage. Three blasts on the siren followed by a chorus of "Fire in the holes."

Time to go. Moving systematically, the fuses were ignited in a staggered pattern, leaving the main crater for last. Back at the standby point, we silently waited.

BOOOM ... BOOOM ... BOOOM ...

BOOOM. Our tension levels began to decrease a bit more as we counted each successful detonation. Finally, with all shots accounted for ... KABOOOM!

The main crater exploded in a fiery roar. It was over. One more trip down range for a final safety inspection, and we were finished.

Although the rescue team was subsequently decorated for heroism, trust me, as we sweated and inched our way up that windswept dirt path, our eyes fixed on those fluttering white ribbons, medals were the last thing on our minds.

Richard L. Sherrow is SOF's Forensic Sciences Contributing Editor. ✕

Full Auto

Continued from page 25

none. It was, however, not an easy machine gun to manufacture. There were 247 milling operations on the receiver alone, and for that 740 gages were required, each made to an accuracy of 0.0005-inch.

The original Mark 1 caliber .303 British barrel measured 25 inches in total length and included an unusual stainless-steel one-piece gas block, front sight housing and flash hider. In an attempt to simplify manufacture, a Mk2 version was introduced during World War II that utilized a new barrel with a flash hider and front sight assembly separate from the gas block, which remained of stainless-steel construction. Mk2 barrels are also 25 inches in length. On 26 May 1944, the Mk3 Bren was introduced. Its principal modifications were a lightened receiver and shorter barrel with an overall length of 22.25 inches. This latter version was intended for airborne and jungle operations.

Among my many Bren barrels is one for which I can locate no open source information. It came from a Bren manufactured in 1961 at the small-arms factory in Ishapore, India, about 20 miles upstream of Calcutta on the Hoogly River. The receiver was marked "Mk1/3," but the barrel is stamped "MK4*". This caliber-.303 British barrel is made in the manner of the original Mk1 barrel, that is, it has a stainless-steel one-piece gas block, front sight housing and flash hider. Most peculiar is the length, which is only 21.5 inches. This is, as far as I know, the shortest Bren barrel ever fielded.

Stoner 63(A) Links

Stoner 63(A) machine guns are rare, very rare. There are probably no more than 170 in private collections in the United States. Unfortunately, for those lucky enough to own one, the links are even harder to come by. M27 links designed for the FN Minimi (M249 SAW) usually do not operate with milspec reliability in the Stoner 63(A) system. Borg Warner manufactured links for the Stoner 63(A) system and experienced an ongoing heat-treat problem until the very last batches, when this situation was finally corrected. Jerry Tarble (Jay Tee's, Dept. SOF, RFD 4, Box 353, Marshall, IL 62441; phone: 217-826-2919; fax: 217-826-2345), an acknowledged authority on the Stoner 63(A) system, has acquired a substantial quantity of the last lot of Stoner 63 links that Borg Warner produced. They are in new condition and cost 25 cents each. Expensive? You bet'cha, but they can be used over and over again.

Jerry also has 100-round belt boxes for the Stoner 63(A) for \$50 each, Stoner 63(A) tripod cradles that fit on the Browning M2 tripod for \$400 and adapter brackets to use M249 ammunition assault packs on the Stoner 63(A) for \$200 each. ✕

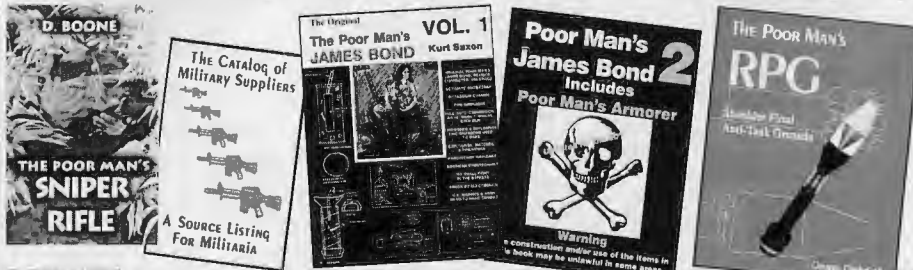
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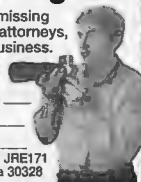
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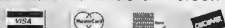
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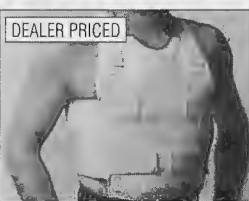
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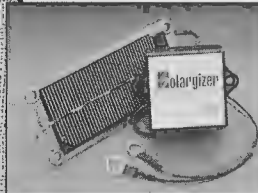
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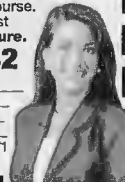
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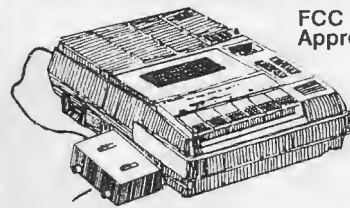
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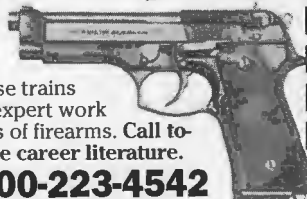
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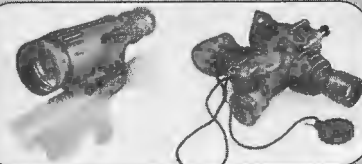
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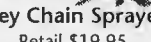
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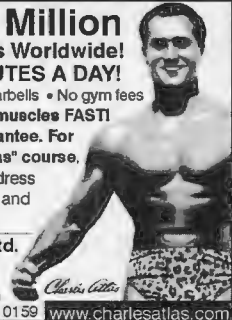
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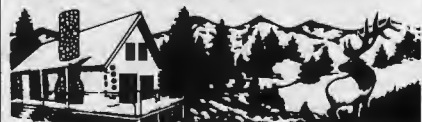
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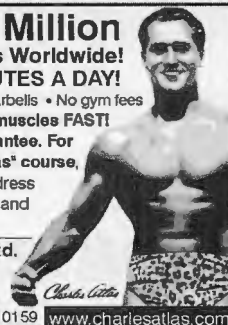
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Another War Game We Won't Win

The great slurping sound you hear is U.S. Army combat boots being sucked deeper into the Bosnian swamps.

Our troops have been extended again in Bosnia because Bill Clinton won't tell European leaders to go it alone. Clinton knew that if he kept his promise to the American people to pull our forces out in June, the Europeans would be on the next bus. Then his Bosnian mission would belly up, not unlike his disasters in Somalia and Haiti.

This time around, he finally figured out expiration dates only work on cartons of cottage cheese, not in matters of strategy, and left the pull-out date open-ended. Otherwise, the crazies there would do as the Reds did in Vietnam — wait until we've announced we're splitting and then come out swinging.

No end date also means Clinton's successor can wrestle with the Bosnian problem long after he's left the White House. Another reason they call him Slick Willie.

Now American warriors could be stuck in Bosnia for at least 10 more years. So far the cost has been scores of Purple Hearts and over \$8 billion. The budget for 1998 alone is almost \$4 billion, twice the amount for North Korea's and Cuba's annual defenses. And, with mission creep increasing, more of our soldiers will be earning their Hazardous Duty pay the hard way.

Only last month, two Dutch SFOR members were wounded by a grenade thrown by locals on the warpath because two of their war-crimes-indicted henchmen were arrested. You didn't see this report on the tube — where most of us get our news — because most things negative that go down in Bosnia seldom get on American TV.

It's also true that many Americans don't even know our soldiers are braving their *third* winter in Bosnia. Other NATO troops have the run of the country while our troops are kept locked up as if they're in prison. The lid is obviously on.

Clinton, once a member of the Vietnam peace choir, well-remembers the chant that drove LBJ bonkers — "Hey, Hey, LBJ, how many did you kill today?" So his guidance to his generals is: Treat the troops as if they were under siege on the front lines with plenty of incoming, wrapped in sandbags, helmets and body armor. Then there will be fewer bodybags coming home and our citizens will never do unto Clinton as they did unto LBJ.



Col. David Hackworth, (Ret.) also writes a syndicated weekly column titled "Defending America." "Hack" doesn't pull any punches and many liberal rags won't carry his writing. If your local paper falls into that category, call the editor and let him know you'd like to see "Defending America" on the Op-Ed page. It's syndicated by King Features, 235 E. 45th St., New York, NY 10017.

No bad ink means no stink from a public kept in the dark by a press with few reporters qualified to report on military matters — because most haven't served and don't know the score.

The Bosnia mission is ripping the guts out of the U.S. Army, which is still carrying the main load there. The bucks for doing mainly police work comes out of its maintenance and training budgets. The result is the longer our forces stay there, the duller their readiness sword becomes. Also, the longer they stay, the more regulars quit. It's a no-brainer — guard duty earns bigger bucks with less danger at Wells Fargo.

Keeping American troops in Bosnia won't solve that deeply divided country's problems either. Clinton seems to think that time heals all wounds — that somehow, with time, the multi-ethnic Serbs, Croats and Muslims who've been blowing each other away for centuries will lay down their hatreds, kiss and make up.

But, like Humpty Dumpty, Bosnia will *never* be put back together again. We can stay there for decades and when we leave, they'll go at it again. It's more likely that Stormin' Norman will take up ballet than Clinton's "Dayton Dream" that Bosnia will be unified into a single multi-ethnic state will come true.

Clinton and his generals should go back and read H.R. McMaster's *Dereliction Of Duty* to insure they don't

repeat the mistakes of the Vietnam-era crew. Then they should do what we should have done in Vietnam in 1964 — announce victory and bring our troops home. Now.

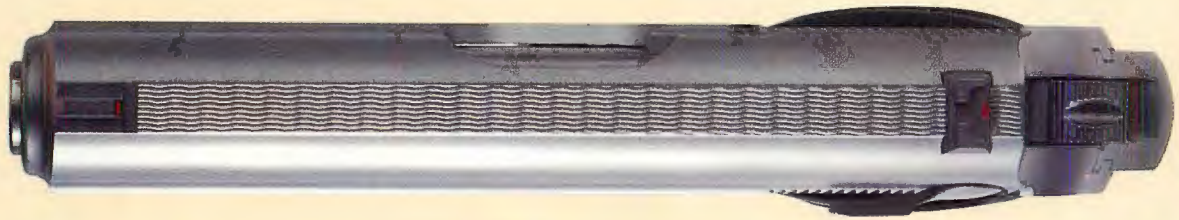
The Bosnian problem should be given to our European pals, many of whom supplied our enemy during the Vietnam War. They should equip, organize and pay for their own European police force to train Croat, Serb and Muslims security forces to guard their own separate republics formed from what's now the Bosnian quagmire.

[Http://www.hackworth.com](http://www.hackworth.com) is the address of David Hackworth's home page.

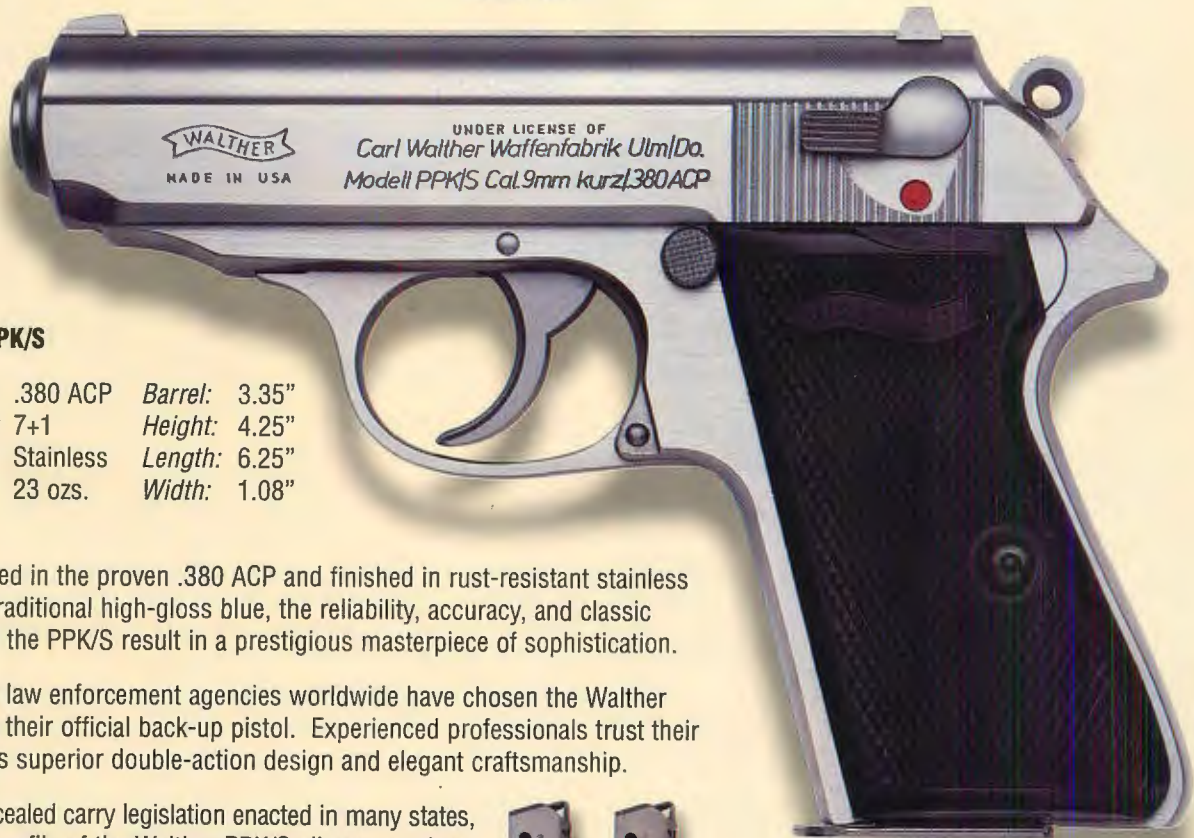
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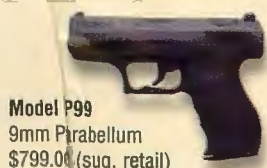
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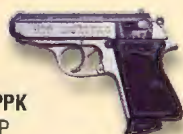
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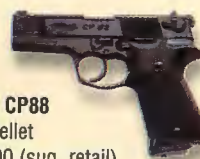
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